

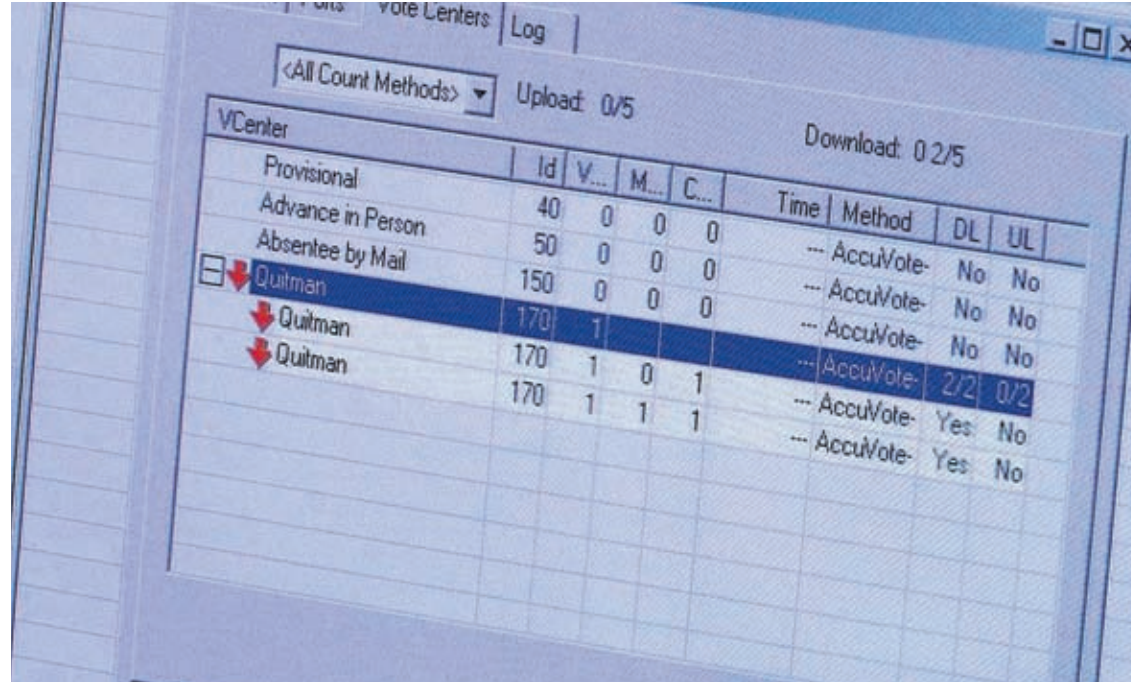


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Georgia election server showed signs of tampering: Expert

By FRANK BAJAK
AP Technology Reporter

BOSTON (AP) — A computer security expert says he found that a forensic image of the election server central to a legal battle over the integrity of Georgia elections showed signs that the original server was hacked. The server was left exposed to the open internet for at least six months, a problem the same expert discovered in August 2016. It was subsequently wiped clean in mid-2017 with no notice, just days after election integrity activists filed a lawsuit seeking an overhaul of what they called the state's unreliable and negligently run election system. In late December 2019, the plaintiffs were finally able to obtain a copy of the server's contents that the FBI made in March 2017 and retained.



This Sept. 22, 2016 file photo shows the screen of an electronic voting machine during testing at the Kennesaw State University Center for Election Systems in Kennesaw, Ga.

Continued on Page 3

Associated Press

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In this Jan. 13, 2020, file photo, President Donald Trump, left, and acting White House chief of staff Mick Mulvaney, right, walk along the colonnade of the White House in Washington.

Associated Press

By **ANDREW TAYLOR** and **ZEKE MILLER**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House violated federal law in withholding security assistance to Ukraine, an action at the center of President Donald Trump's impeachment, a federal watchdog agency said

Thursday.

The Government Accountability Office said in a report that the Office of Management and Budget broke the law in holding up the aid, which Congress passed less than a year ago, saying "the President is not vested with the power to ignore or amend any

Watchdog: White House violated law in freezing Ukraine aid

such duly enacted law." The aid in question was held up last summer on orders from Trump but was released in September after Congress pushed for its release and a whistleblower's complaint about Trump's July call with the Ukrainian leader became public. The independent agency, which reports to Congress, said OMB violated the Impoundment Control Act by delaying the security assistance for "policy reasons," rather than technical budgetary needs. "Faithful execution of the law does not permit the President to substitute his own policy priorities for those that Congress has enacted into law," wrote the

agency's general counsel, Thomas Armstrong, in the report. Capitol Hill Democrats seized on the report as evidence of a lawless White House, led by acting chief of staff Mick Mulvaney, who is a key figure in the impeachment investigation of Trump. "The OMB, the White House, the administration broke — I'm saying this — broke the law," said House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif. Democrats want Mulvaney, who is still officially the OMB director, to be subpoenaed as a witness in Trump's impeachment trial. The Senate opened the trial Thursday, with opening arguments set to begin next week. "Congress makes funding decisions, and the Trump Administration's illegal impoundment of these vital national security funds was a brazen assault on the checks and balances inherent to our democracy," said House Appropriations Committee Chairwoman Nita Lowey, D-N.Y. "Given

that this illegal conduct threatened our security and undermined our elections, I feel even more strongly that the House has chosen the right course by impeaching President Trump. No one is above the law." OMB has argued the hold was appropriate and necessary. "We disagree with GAO's opinion. OMB uses its apportionment authority to ensure taxpayer dollars are properly spent consistent with the President's priorities and with the law," said OMB spokeswoman Rachel Semmel. Trump was impeached last month on charges of abusing his power for pressuring Ukraine to investigate Democratic rivals, as he was withholding the aid, and for obstructing Congress' ensuing probe. The Senate will decide whether to convict him on either charge, which would result in his removal from office. A two-thirds vote is required for conviction. □

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Georgia election server showed signs of tampering: Expert

Continued from Front

State officials have said they've seen no evidence that any election-related data was compromised. But they also long refused to submit the server image for an independent examination. Logan Lamb, a security expert for the plaintiffs, said in an affidavit filed in Atlanta federal court on Thursday that he found evidence suggesting the server was compromised in December 2014. Lamb said the evidence suggests an attacker exploited a bug that provided full control of the server.

Lamb also said he determined that computer logs — which would have been critical to understanding what might have been altered on or stolen from the server — only go back to Nov. 10, 2016 — two days after Donald Trump was elected U.S. president. Two years later, Brian Kemp won the Georgia governor's race by a narrow margin over Democrat Stacey Abrams.

Kemp oversaw Georgia's elections during the 2016 race as secretary of state. Election administration was handled at Kennesaw State University by an outfit that Kemp's office dismantled after the server-wiping incident.

Additionally, Lamb found evidence that election-related files were deleted from the server on March 2, 2017, just after a colleague of his alerted KSU officials that the election server remained vulnerable to hackers.

It was Lamb who initially alerted Merle King, director of the elections center at KSU, in August 2016 of a gaping security hole that left the server vulnerable to tampering.

The fact that the access logs were deleted suggests possible foul play, Lamb wrote. "I can think of no legitimate reason why records from that critical period of time should have been deleted," he said in his sworn statement.

A protective order prevented Lamb from speak-

ing to a reporter about his findings. A spokesman for Georgia's secretary of state, Brad Raffensperger, had no immediate comment.

In his original and less methodical examination of the server after he discovered it exposed online, Lamb said he found personal data for Georgia's 6.7 million voters as well as passwords used by county officials to access election-staging files.

For the 2020 election, Georgia officials are replacing antiquated touchscreen voting machines that have long been discredited by computer scientists. But Marks' group rejects the computerized ballot-marking devices the state has purchased to replace them.

It maintains, paralleling the findings last year of a National Academies of Sciences report, that the only secure voting solution are hand-marked ballots processed by scanners that leave a paper trail that can be audited later. Most U.S. voters will use systems with an auditable paper trail in November.

"The defendants have since day one tried to do everything possible to obstruct the public, the plaintiffs and the court from seeing the shambles of what they had in an incredibly compromised election system," said Marilyn Marks of the Coalition for Good Governance, one of the plaintiffs in the case.

Now, she said, state officials argue that because of their new system, problems with the old system aren't relevant anymore.

"Of course, that's not true," she added. "This was the hub of their entire elections structure."

The FBI obtained the server image as part of an investigation into the security researchers who alerted KSU to the server's security hole. Those researchers were never accused of any wrongdoing. It is not clear, however, if the FBI ever examined the image to try to determine whether it had been compromised,



In this Sept. 22, 2016, file photo, employees of the Fulton County Election Preparation Center in Atlanta test electronic voting machines.

Associated Press

a significant question given intelligence agents in the federal findings of interference by Russian military agents in the 2016 election. An FBI spokesman in Atlanta, Kevin Rowson, declined to comment on the matter. □

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Senate passes U.S.-Canada-Mexico trade deal, a Trump priority

By KEVIN FREKING

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate overwhelmingly approved a new North American trade agreement Thursday that rewrites the rules of trade with Canada and Mexico and gives President Donald Trump a major policy win before senators turn their full attention to his impeachment trial. The vote was 89-10. The measure goes to Trump for his signature. It would replace the 25-year-old North American Free Trade Agreement, known as NAFTA, which tore down most trade barriers and triggered a surge in trade. But Trump and other critics blamed that pact for encouraging U.S. companies to move their manufacturing plants south of the border to take advantage of low-wage Mexican laborers.

Passage of the trade bill, which has come to be called USMCA, came one day after Trump signed a new trade agreement with China, easing trade tensions between the economic powers.



Deputy Prime Minister of Canada Chrystia Freeland, left, Mexico's top trade negotiator Jesus Seade, center, and U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, sign an update to the North American Free Trade Agreement, at the national palace in Mexico City, Tuesday, Dec. 10, 2019. Associated Press

"Quite a week of substantive accomplishments for the nation, for the president and for our international trade," said Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., shortly before the vote.

The final vote occurred just

moments before Congress opened an impeachment trial, with House Democrats reading the formal charges from the well of the Senate. With the trial and an election year, Congress is not expected to pass many major bills. The trade bill

gives lawmakers from both parties the chance to cite progress on an important economic issue before the November vote.

Trump campaigned in 2016 on ripping up trade deals that he said added to the nation's trade deficit and cost the country manufacturing jobs.

He promised he would rewrite NAFTA if elected, a pact he described as "the worst trade deal in history." He can now go to swing states such as Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, and tell voters he followed through on that pledge.

"Today, we just had passed the USMCA. It's going to take the place of NAFTA, which is a terrible deal, and the USMCA will probably be second to this witch hunt hoax," Trump said.

Mexico has already approved the agreement. Canada is expected to do so in coming months, with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government long insisting it would wait for U.S. approval before proceeding.

Sen. Pat Toomey, R-Pa., was a rare voice in speaking against the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement. "It will mean higher prices for American consumers, who will have

to pay more money for a car and therefore will have less money available for any of the other things they would like to consume," Toomey said. "It will probably lead to an increase or acceleration in the shift to automation."

The agreement aims to have more cars produced in the United States, where workers earn an average of at least \$16 an hour. It also secured changes that require Mexico to change its laws to make it easier for workers to form independent unions, which should improve worker conditions and wages and reduce the incentive for U.S. companies to relocate their plants.

While the administration completed its negotiations with Canada and Mexico more than a year ago, Democrats in the House insisted on changes that they said made it more likely Mexico would follow through on its commitments. As part of those negotiations, the administration agreed to drop a provision that offered expensive biologic drugs — made from living cells — 10 years of protection from cheaper knockoff competition. Democrats overwhelmingly opposed that provision.

Republicans and the president have complained about how long it took to complete the negotiations, but the talks resulted in a rare mix of support for a trade agreement.

The AFL-CIO, an association of trade unions, endorsed the measure, as did scores of business and farm groups. "Getting the Chamber of Commerce and the AFL-CIO to both endorse this trade deal was no easy feat, and it took both sides' good faith efforts to get us here," said Sen. Charles Grassley, R-Iowa.

The biggest holdouts were environmental groups, which continue their opposition, saying the deal doesn't address climate change. Indeed, they contend the agreement would contribute to rising temperatures. □


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Florida high court sides with governor on felon voter rights

By **BOBBY CAINA CALVAN**
TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) —

The Florida Supreme Court sided with Gov. Ron DeSantis on Thursday in a legal dispute over restoring voting rights to felons with unpaid fines — one of many clashes over the ballot box in a state that will play a crucial role in this year's presidential election. The court's advisory opinion — requested by the Republican governor last year — has no immediate legal consequence, but could influence federal judges weighing legal wranglings over the voter-approved measure known as Amendment 4. In a separate opinion, the court found no reason to prevent a measure from going to voters this year that would tweak the state's constitution to specify that "only a citizen" of the United States can vote in Florida.

A conservative group friendly to President Donald Trump is seeking the change from the current citizenship requirement stating that "every citizen" who is qualified to register can vote.

In a politically crucial state like Florida, ballot-box access has spawned numerous battles across numerous arenas.

At the time Amendment 4 was ratified overwhelmingly by voters in November 2018, proponents said it would give voting rights back to about 1.4 million felons who have completed their prison terms.

In its advisory opinion, the court said only felons who have fully completed their sentences can regain access to the ballot box. And the court agreed with the governor and legislative Republicans that this means all outstanding legal financial obligations,

which it referred to as LFOs, must have been satisfied.

"The answer to the Governor's question largely turns on whether 'all terms of

ing any resolution until after the 2020 elections.

Soon after the amendment's passage, the Republican-controlled Leg-

4. In a tweet, DeSantis said he was "pleased" with the decision.

"Voting is a privilege that should not be taken lightly,

Amendment 4 proponents had previously represented the measure differently as they are now — and had agreed that a completed sentence also meant satisfying all financial obligations. The justices said voters would have understood the phrase to refer "not only to durational periods but also to all LFOs imposed in conjunction with an adjudication of guilt."

While Justice Jorge Labarga concurred with the resulting opinion, he disagreed with the majority's conclusion that the phrase "all terms of sentence," as used in Amendment 4, would have been understood by voters to include unpaid fines and other legal financial obligations.

The Southern Poverty Law Center, which represents several felons who sued the state to regain their voting rights, called Thursday's court decision "dangerous."

"By holding Floridians' right to vote hostage, the Florida Supreme Court is permitting the unconstitutional modern-day poll tax," said Nancy Abudu, the deputy legal director for the Southern Poverty Law Center. □



In this Tuesday, Oct. 29, 2019 file photo, Gov. Ron DeSantis speaks at pre-legislative news conference in Tallahassee, Fla.

Associated Press

sentence' encompasses all obligations or only durational periods," the court wrote. "We conclude that the phrase, when read and understood in context, plainly refers to obligations and includes 'all' — not some — LFOs imposed in conjunction with an adjudication of guilt."

Advocates for restoring the rights argue that felons merely had to serve the duration of their prison sentences before becoming eligible, and were not required to finish paying court-imposed fines, restitution or other legal fees.

Voter rights groups have sued the state in federal court, but a trial is not expected until spring. The lower-court ruling is almost certain to be appealed by the losing side, likely delay-

ing any resolution until after the 2020 elections.

Soon after the amendment's passage, the Republican-controlled Legislature stipulated that to complete sentences, felons must pay all fines and fees before getting their voting rights restored.

Voting rights groups sued in federal court immediately after DeSantis signed the GOP bill into law, likening the financial requirements to an illegal barrier for people who can't afford to pay. To possibly bolster his case, the governor sought the advisory opinion from the state's high court. The governor, however, did not ask the justices to determine the constitutionality of the legislatively enacted law. Instead, the governor asked the court to make a determination as to the meaning of a key phrase in the voter-approved measure known as Amendment

and I am obligated to faithfully implement Amendment 4 as it is defined," he tweeted.

In its advisory opinion, the court noted that some



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DHS seeks Pentagon funds for 270 miles of border wall

By **LOLITA C. BALDOR**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Department of Homeland Security has asked the Pentagon to fund the construction of 270 miles of border wall this year as part of a counter-drug effort, defense officials said Thursday.

The officials said the request came in Wednesday, and the Pentagon is beginning what will be a two-week assessment to determine what will be approved. The officials, who briefed reporters on condition of anonymity, would not provide any cost estimates. The request comes amid sharp divisions about the border wall between President Donald Trump and members of Congress who have opposed the use of military funding for the construction.

The border wall is one of Trump's signature issues — he's been talking about building a "big beautiful wall" between the U.S. and Mexico since his early campaign days. He also has claimed that Mexico is paying for the wall, but that has not happened.

Instead, money has been diverted from military construction projects and drug interdiction funding, setting up a persistent source of conflict between Democratic lawmakers and Trump in the budget bills each year.

Defense officials said the request is for construction or replacement of border barriers, lighting and roads in six sectors across several states. The six areas, the officials said, are high traffic areas that include some urban sections near border crossings.

Earlier this week, officials said the Trump administration was weighing whether to shift billions more in military funding to build the border wall. And House Appropriations Committee Chairwoman Nita M. Lowey and other lawmakers said the administration was planning to "steal" \$7.2 billion in counternarcotics and military construction funding to pay for the wall.



In this Sept. 10, 2019 file photo, government contractors erect a section of Pentagon-funded border wall along the Colorado River in Yuma, Ariz.

Associated Press

Officials on Thursday said there have been no decisions about any funding levels. And they said the Pentagon's two-week review will assess if the request meets legal requirements and seeks feasible construction. Senior military leaders will review the im-

impact on military readiness and the comptroller will identify potential funds. A final decision would be made by Defense Secretary Mark Esper.

When asked about wall funding this week, Esper said the Pentagon considers the southwest U.S. bor-

der to be part of its mission to protect the homeland, and that the department supports the DHS in that respect. Asked whether that meant supporting DHS financially, he said, "If that's what it takes, we prepared to support."

Last year Trump was forced

to settle for just \$1.4 billion in wall funding following the longest government shutdown in history. In reaction, he declared a national emergency that allowed him to shift almost three times as much money from military accounts to wall building. The Supreme Court ruled this summer the funds could be used. In total, about \$12 billion has been allocated for the wall. And billions more have been requested.

The defense officials said that last year counternarcotics funding was authorized for use to construct 129 miles of border reinforcement. Military construction money is being used for another 175 miles. All together, the officials said, they expect to complete 400 to 500 miles of border construction by the end of this year.

The officials said broadly that counterdrug money can be used for the wall because the entire southwest border has been certified by DHS as a drug smuggling corridor. □

Board delays vote on moving Confederate monument at Ole Miss

By **EMILY WAGSTER PETTUS**
Associated Press

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — A Confederate monument will remain, for now, in a prominent spot on the University of Mississippi campus, nearly a year after student leaders requested that it be moved to a Civil War cemetery.

The board that governs Mississippi's eight public universities met Thursday and delayed a vote on a proposal to move the monument. Trustee Tom Duff said he wants more information from the university, but he did not specify what he's seeking. The Confederate cemetery is on the Oxford campus, but it's in a place few people walk or drive.

The University of Mississippi was founded in 1848, and the marble statue of a saluting Confederate soldier was put up in 1906.

It is one of many Confederate monuments erected across the South more than a century ago. Critics say its display near the university's main administrative building sends a signal that Ole Miss glorifies the Confederacy and glosses over the South's history of slavery. The statue was a rallying point in 1962 for people who rioted to oppose court-ordered integration of the university. Pro-Confederate groups from outside the university rallied at the monument Feb. 23, prompting Ole Miss basketball players to kneel during the national anthem, in protest of the rally. Student government leaders voted March 5 to ask administrators to move the monument to the cemetery, where Confederate soldiers killed at the Battle of Shiloh are buried. In December, trustees of



The Confederate statue is located in the Circle at the University of Mississippi, in Oxford, Miss. on Thursday, January 16, 2020.

Associated Press

the Mississippi Department of Archives and History approved Ole Miss' architectural and engineering plans for moving the monument. That board said the plans meet U.S. Department of Interior standards for treatment of historical monuments.

The University of Mississippi has worked for more than 20 years to distance itself from Confederate imagery, often amid resistance from tradition-

bound donors and alumni. The nickname for athletic teams remains the Rebels, but the university retired its Colonel Reb mascot in 2003 amid criticism that the bearded old man looked like a plantation owner. In 1997, administrators banned sticks in the football stadium, which largely stopped people from waving Confederate battle flags. The marching band no longer plays "Dixie." □

Mississippi governor: Prison violence was a 'catastrophe'

By EMILY WAGSTER PETTUS
Associated Press

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — Mississippi's new governor said Thursday that the state will conduct a nationwide search for a new commissioner to lead a state prison system that's reckoning with what he called a "catastrophe" — a recent outburst of deadly violence and longstanding problems with vacant jobs and damaged facilities. Republican Gov. Tate Reeves also said the Mississippi Bureau of Investigation will assign an officer to the Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman to uncover any criminal activity connected to the violence.

"As a husband, as a father and as governor, it is my duty to protect your loved ones just as I would my wife, Elee, and our three girls," Reeves said at a news conference. "We have all seen the catastrophe that the current state of our prison system has allowed for. There will always be bad people in the world who wish to inflict pain on others. ... We will never fully eradicate evil, but we can do better than this."

Reeves said he is appointing an interim commissioner of corrections. Tommy Taylor is mayor of the small town of Boyle, and is a former state lawmaker with experience in law enforcement.

The group searching for a long-term commissioner will be led by Vicksburg Mayor George Flaggs, another former state lawmaker. At different times, Flaggs and Taylor each served as chairman of the state House committee with oversight of prisons.

Others on the search group are two district attorneys, a judge, a former state Parole Board member, a current sheriff and a retired sheriff.

One of the district attorneys, Jody Owens of Hinds County, previously worked for Southern Poverty Law Center, a group that has questioned harsh living conditions in the prisons. The retired sheriff, Greg Waggoner of Leake County, helped federal authorities investigate a corruption case against a former Mississippi corrections commissioner who was arrested in 2014 and is now in federal prison.

Reeves served the past eight years as lieutenant governor and was inaugurated as governor on Tuesday. He is replacing some state agency directors and keeping others.

Pelicia Hall had been commissioner of the Mississippi Department of Corrections since 2017. She announced Dec. 31 that she would leave the job in mid-January, which coincides with the transition from former Republican Gov. Phil Bryant to Reeves.

Between Dec. 29 and Jan. 3, five inmates were killed and an undisclosed number of others were injured in violence inside the prisons. More than two dozen inmates sued the state Tues-



Republican Gov. Tate Reeves reacts to a question during a news conference regarding his establishing a diverse group of experienced Mississippians to help with a nationwide search for a new Mississippi Department of Corrections (MDOC) commissioner, Thursday, Jan. 16, 2020.

Associated Press

day, saying understaffed prisons are "plagued by violence" and inmates are forced to live in decrepit and dangerous conditions. All of the plaintiffs have been inmates at Parchman.

Because of damage caused during the unrest,

hundreds of prisoners were moved from one unit at the Parchman to another unit there that closed years ago because of decrepit conditions. The state then entered an emergency contract to move 375 of those inmates to a private prison nearby. □

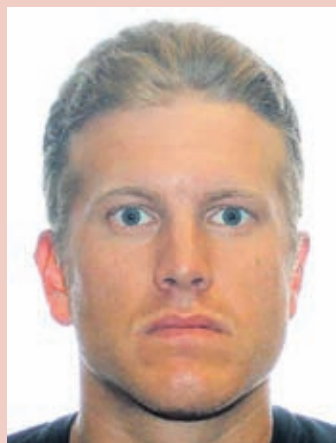
FBI arrests 3 white supremacists ahead of pro-gun rally

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN
and MIKE BALSAMO

COLLEGE PARK, Md. (AP) — FBI agents on Thursday arrested a former Canadian Armed Forces reservist and two other men who are linked to a violent white supremacist group and were believed to be heading to a pro-gun rally next week in Virginia's capital.

The three men are members of The Base and were arrested on federal charges in a criminal complaint unsealed in Maryland, according to a Justice Department news release.

Tuesday's complaint charges Canadian national Patrik Jordan



This undated photo provided by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police shows Patrik Mathews.

Associated Press

Mathews, 27, and Brian Mark Lemley Jr., 33, of Elkton, Maryland, with transporting a firearm and ammunition with intent to commit a felony. □



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Russia's new PM a career bureaucrat with no political aims

By **DARIA LITVINOVA**

Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Mikhail Mishustin never had any political ambitions as a career bureaucrat and his name didn't come up as a top candidate to become Russia's next prime minister. But the 53-year-old Mishustin, the longtime chief of Russia's tax service, was tapped for the post by President Vladimir Putin. The lower house of Russia's parliament, the Duma, quickly appointed Mishustin as prime minister on Thursday.

Putin put Mishustin's candidacy forward on Wednesday night, several hours after Dmitry Medvedev resigned along with the whole Cabinet. Just before that, Putin proposed sweeping changes to the constitution that could keep him in power well past the end of his term in 2024.

As a career bureaucrat who has been in charge of Russia's taxes for the past 10 years, Mishustin has always kept a low profile and stayed away from politics.



Russian Tax Service chief Mikhail Mishustin listens to Russian President Vladimir Putin during their meeting in the Kremlin in Moscow, Russia, Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2020.

Associated Press

He doesn't belong to a political party and in rare interviews prefers to talk about innovations in tax administration.

The move sent shockwaves through Russia's political elite and left them pondering about future Cabinet appointments.

Mishustin has been hailed for modernizing Russia's rigid tax administration system and boosting tax collection rates. Government officials

and businessmen describe him as a professional and effective manager who understands the economy well, which makes him a good fit for the Cabinet during a time when Russia's economy is weakened.

"The main tasks for the new prime minister will come from the necessity to modernize the economy," Abbas Gallyamov, a former Kremlin speech writer turned independent political analyst, wrote in a Facebook post. "Mishustin has a reputation of a per-

son who has this experience." Mishustin's lack of political ambition or any political experience indicates that he is likely to dutifully carry out the Kremlin's wishes as the head of the Cabinet — which some commentators point out is especially important in the "transition period" of constitutional reforms proposed by Putin. Mishustin, who has a degree in information technology, has been a state official for the past two decades. His career kicked off in 1998, when he became deputy head of the State Tax Service.

Although not active in politics, he has rubbed shoulders or even collided with politicians as a player in the amateur Night Hockey League, in which Putin also plays. Mishustin also is a board member of Moscow's CSKA hockey team. In 2010, after a two-year stint at a private investment firm, Mishustin returned to the tax service, this time as its chief and handpicked by Putin, then himself a prime minister. Having earned around \$2.6 million in 2009, Mishustin was the third-richest state official in Russia at the time.

Over the years, Mishustin "has created a cutting-edge tax service from the ground up, using modern technologies and (means of) digital economy," said Vyacheslav Volodin, the speaker of Russia's lower house of parliament.

Under Mishustin, the tax service launched two vast data centers that collected invoices from businesses and information from retail cash registers, ensuring better control of cash flows. Mishustin also introduced a variety of online services that made paying taxes easier in an effort to raise tax collection rates.

In November, he proudly reported that the amount of successfully collected taxes had increased by 1.4 times since 2014. The share of tax revenues in the country's gross domestic product had also grown by 4 percentage points, while value-added tax collection rose by 64%.

Mishustin's track record inspired hopes that as prime minister, he would be able to shake up the country's stagnating economy — something Russians have been increasingly frustrated about in recent years. □

Australia firefighters save world's only rare dinosaur trees

By **ROD McGUIRK**

Associated Press

CANBERRA, Australia (AP) — Specialist firefighters have saved the world's last remaining wild stand of a prehistoric tree from wildfires that razed forests west of Sydney, officials said Thursday.

Firefighters winched from helicopters to reach the cluster of fewer than 200 Wollemi Pines in a remote gorge in the Blue Mountains a week before a massive wildlife bore down, National Parks and Wildlife Service Director David Crust said.

The firefighters set up an irrigation system to keep the so-called dinosaur trees moist and pumped water daily from the gorge as the blaze that had burned out of control for more than



In this photo taken early Jan. 2020, and provided Thursday, Jan. 16, 2020, by the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service personnel use fire hoses to dampen the forest floor near Wollemi pine trees in the Wollemi National Park, New South Wales, Australia.

Associated Press

two month edged closer. Firefighting planes strategically bombed the fire front with fire retardant to slow its progress.

"That helped just to slow the intensity of the fire as it approached the site," Crust told Australian Broadcasting Corp. □



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Nations of Iran crash victims seek compensation for families

By JILL LAWLESS

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The governments of five countries that lost citizens when Iran shot down a Ukrainian airliner demanded Thursday that Tehran accept "full responsibility" and pay compensation to the victims' families — though they had little to offer besides moral pressure to get Iran to comply. After a meeting in London, foreign ministers from Canada, the U.K., Afghanistan, Sweden and Ukraine urged Iran to allow a "thorough, independent and transparent international investigation," as well as a criminal probe and "impartial" judicial proceedings against those found responsible for downing the plane.

All 176 people aboard the Ukraine International Airlines aircraft died when it was brought down by ballistic missiles shortly after taking off from Tehran's Imam Khomeini International Airport on Jan. 8. The victims included 57 Canadian citizens as well as 11 Ukrainians, 17 people from Sweden, four Afghans and four British citizens, as well as Iranians.

"We are here to pursue closure, accountability, transparency and justice" for the victims, Canadian Foreign Minister Francois-Philippe Champagne said after meeting with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Vadym Prystaiko, Swedish Foreign Affairs Minister Ann Linde, Afghan Acting Foreign Minister Idrees Zaman, British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab and U.K. Middle East Minister Andrew Murrison. Before the meeting at the Canadian High Commission, ministers from the five nations lit candles at a vigil in memory of the dead passengers and crew members. Iran initially blamed a technical fault for the plane crash, before acknowledging in the face of mounting evidence that its paramilitary Revolutionary Guard had accidentally brought down the jetliner. Champagne said it was a "good first step" that Iran had accepted responsi-

bility. "From that admission obviously flow consequences," he said, including the need to pay compensation. In keeping with international norms, Iran has invited Ukraine, Canada, the United States and France to take part in the crash investigation. The Boeing 737 was built in the United States and the engine was built by a U.S.-French consortium. But it's unclear whether Iran will share all key details or give the countries' experts full access. Canada — which doesn't have an embassy in Iran — has demanded official status in the investigation. Canadian Transport Minister Marc Garneau said Wednesday that two Canadian investigators were in Iran as part of an international team and had good co-operation, but Garneau wants their participation in the probe formalized. Garneau said the plane's voice and flight data recorders are in Iranian hands, but another two Canadian investigators are ready to go wherever and whenever they are examined. Champagne said Canada, the other four affected nations and the Netherlands, which lost almost 200 citizens when a Malaysian airliner flying from Amsterdam was shot down over eastern Ukraine in 2014, had offered to provide expertise to the investigation. He urged Iran to accept and to allow full access for the countries' consular officials.

He said discussions were underway with Tehran on allowing international experts to participate in identifying the victims' remains. Asked what pressure could be applied if Iran did not cooperate, Champagne said: "It's called the international community." The downing of the plane came amid heightened tensions between Iran and the United States over the killing of Revolutionary Guard commander Gen. Qassem Soleimani in a U.S. drone strike. Iran fired missiles at Iraqi bases housing U.S. troops in retaliation for his death. □



Francois-Philippe Champagne, Canada Minister of Foreign Affairs, centre, Ukraine Minister of Foreign Affairs Vadym Prystaiko, second right, United Kingdoms Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Dominic Raab, second left, Sweden's Minister of Foreign Affairs Ann Linde, left, and Afghanistan's Foreign Minister Idrees Zaman, hold a minute of silence behind candles and in front of a plaque with the names of the victims of flight PS752, at the High Commission of Canada in London, Thursday, Jan. 16, 2020.

Associated Press



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Riot police arrest an anti-government protester who was protesting outside a police headquarters demanding the release of those taken into custody the night before, outside the police headquarters, in Beirut, Lebanon, Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2020.

Associated Press

Lebanese protesters decry security forces' use of violence

By SARAH EL DEEB
Associated Press

Lebanese protesters Thursday decried security forces' use of violence during rallies over the past two days, including attacks on journalists and the detention of over 100 people. Dozens of people, including journalists, rallied outside the Interior Ministry denouncing what they said was the systematic use of force against members of the media. Many raised photos of journalists getting beaten by riot police. Others gathered outside the American University of Beirut and a police station where dozens have been detained since Tuesday. After a period of calm, protests have returned to Lebanon as politicians fail to form a new government and an unprecedented economic crisis deepens. "It has been over 90 days since the beginning of the protests and to this day the authorities have completely failed to address the demands of the protests," said Lynn Maalouf, Amnesty International's Middle East director. "In the past two days, we have seen an escalation on both sides." Protests turned violent Tuesday when demonstrators

pelted security forces with stones and water bottles and smashed windows of commercial banks they accuse of corruption and denying them their deposits. Meanwhile, security forces have used "excessive" tear gas in densely populated districts and detained over 100 people, including five minors according to lawyers, in an unprecedented wave of arrests, Maalouf said. They have beaten and verbally abused some protesters and attacked journalists, trying to prevent them from filming, she said. A Reuters video journalist was injured by security forces and treated in a hospital. Late Wednesday and Thursday, authorities began releasing detainees. Hussein Baydoun, a photographer, said he was briefly detained and asked to erase his pictures by security forces who came after him as he filmed clashes outside a police station Wednesday night. "The officer and three soldiers came at me and (the officer) said bring him to me. They held me and they wrestled the camera from me," Baydoun said. Bachir Abu Zeid was one of over 50 protesters de-

tained late Wednesday outside the police station. He was pulled inside as he tried to help others who fell to the ground. He said he was kept in a small cell with 30 people overnight and was only allowed to call his family nearly six hours after he was taken in. "We are expecting this, it is becoming more violent from them and us. They are not listening to people," Abu Zeid said after his release. "This repression will only make us stronger and give us momentum." Interim Interior Minister Raya El Hassan said attacks on the press were "rejected" and promised an investigation. She said security forces are "tired" and "scared for themselves" after 90 days of protests. That doesn't justify the attacks, she said, but she appealed to journalists to put themselves in the shoes of the security forces, adding that 100 security personnel have been injured. By Thursday evening, hundreds of protesters gathered outside the central bank, then marched in a procession through Beirut to the parliament building, where they called for an independent and immediate government. □



In this Oct. 8, 2019, file photo, technicians walk at the three thematic districts at the under construction site of the Expo 2020 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Associated Press

U.S. says its pavilion at Expo 2020 in Dubai sponsored by UAE

By AYA BATRAWY
Associated Press
DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — The United States said its participation at this year's World's Fair in Dubai is being made possible by "the generosity of the Emirati government."

The U.S. State Department said Wednesday Emirati sponsorship of America's pavilion, estimated to be at least \$60 million, was made "in recognition of the strong partnership between the United States and the United Arab Emirates." The UAE's sponsorship raises a number of questions, such as why American businesses are not paying directly to participate under the umbrella of the U.S. pavilion. Some leading U.S.-based brands could choose to participate independent of the U.S. pavilion. Also, it's unclear how the United States government will now decide which companies and products will be featured in the pavilion, and whether the host nation could have a say in the content that's being showcased. In response to questions from The Associated Press, Expo 2020 Dubai organizers said that, in line with regulations overseeing World Expos, the host organizers provide advice and guidelines on

pavilion design, while the content of the pavilion itself is decided by the participating country. Businesses also take part in the process, either as commercial partners for Expo or as sponsors of the various national pavilions, according to fair organizers. They said U.S.-based brands PepsiCo, Cisco, MasterCard, UPS, Domino's Pizza, and Christie are participating as commercial partners. Dubai is pouring billions of dollars into Expo 2020, hoping the exhibition will generate new business and spur its economy amid a slowdown in growth. The expo starts in October and runs for six months. It marks the first time a country in the Middle East hosts the fair, which showcases technology and the most innovative ideas of the future. "Expos, also known in the United States as World's Fairs, are significant opportunities to showcase American freedom, ideals, enterprise, culture, and global leadership," the U.S. State Department said in its statement. The Expo also gives the American private sector a "golden opportunity" to pursue business partnerships and new markets with visitors from around the world, the statement added. □

European clothing brand group for safety leaving Bangladesh

By **JULHAS ALAM**

Associated Press

DHAKA, Bangladesh (AP)

— A group set up by European clothing brands that has monitored factory safety in Bangladesh for years plans to leave, with its duties being assumed by a local group including unions and industry figures in the world's second-largest garment manufacturer. The European group and a separate North American group were formed after the collapse of Rana Plaza, a building housing five garment factories that made clothing for international brands. The collapse in 2013 killed at least 1,134 people and was one of several fatal accidents in the country's garment industry that were blamed on safety lapses.

The uproar that followed the collapse prompted about 190 European brands including Marks and Spencer, H&M, Tesco and Carrefour to form the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh. Accord's departure, which

officials said Thursday was planned for May, follows a protracted tussle with garment manufacturers who wanted Bangladesh's government to form a local watch group to monitor the sector.

"Accord will be leaving Bangladesh and we are forming a national collaborative council in which brands, unions and industry will be together to monitor factories," Rubana Huq, president of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, told The Associated Press. "We are taking over from Accord all of its resources and will follow their protocols but it will be based on the national context."

The new council will operate within Bangladesh's regulatory framework and cooperate with the government, a joint statement from the Accord and the BGMEA said Wednesday. "It will retain all health and safety inspections and remediation, safety training and complaints handling



In this April 19, 2018 photo, Bangladeshis work at Snowtex garment factory in Dhamrai, near Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Associated Press

functions currently carried out by the Accord," it said. The Accord existed alongside another monitoring group for North American brands called Alliance. It left the country on Dec. 31, 2018, as scheduled after inspecting about 1,000 factories.

The Accord's tenure originally expired in 2018, but the group wanted to stay under some conditions against the will of the government and the garment manufacturers.

It went to court and obtained an extension until Feb. 13, 2020.

The manufacturers accused Accord of recommending "unnecessary and repeated" measures that put pressure on the industry. Accord has inspected 1,650 factories so far and recommended remediation work to make them compliant. □

Lesotho leader soon to step down as murder probe continues

By **HERBERT MOYO**

Associated Press

MASERU, Lesotho (AP)

— The prime minister of Lesotho soon will retire, a government minister said Thursday, as investigations continue into the murder of his former wife. Prime Minister Thomas Thabane communicated his intention to retire to the southern African nation's King Letsie III, cabinet ministers and an envoy of neighboring South Africa, Communications Minister Thesele Maseribane told reporters.

Neither Maseribane nor the South African envoy, Jeff Radebe, said when the prime minister would step down except to say the process would begin soon. Radebe met with the 80-year-old prime minister Thursday for an

appraisal of the unfolding political developments in the tiny nation, and later said the Lesotho leader had shared his intentions. The killing of the prime minister's ex-wife, Lipolelo Thabane, occurred two days before his inauguration for a second term in 2017, and two years after a court ruled that Lipolelo was the lawful first lady and entitled to benefits. Police this week said they were searching for the country's first lady, Maesaiah Thabane, for questioning in the killing, while the police commissioner said the "noose" was tightening around the prime minister and those close to him. Neither the prime minister nor his wife, Maesaiah, have commented publicly on the police remarks. □

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Guatemala sweeps up migrant, group, returns them to border

By **SONIA PÉREZ D.**

Associated Press

EL CINCHADO, Guatemala (AP) —

Guatemalan police accompanied by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents swept up the majority of a group of some 300 migrants Thursday, loaded them on buses and took them back to the Honduran border, effectively dashing their plans to travel together in a "caravan" with hopes of reaching the United States.

Near another border point, a different group of about 600 rested at a shelter after crossing the frontier earlier in the day and encountering no resistance from police. Other, smaller groups were traveling highways elsewhere in unorganized dribs and drabs in a movement involving several thousand people but far different in nature from previous caravans.

Praying and singing songs, the group of 300 migrants — adults, teens and young children — had set out from a shelter in Entre Rios under rainy skies before dawn and walked about six hours before stopping in the town of Morales to eat and rest. There they were challenged by police who asked for their entry documents, and nearly all had crossed into Guatemala irregularly and didn't have such documentation.

The migrants were put on three gray buses and told they had to go back to register properly at a border station under rules governing freedom of travel in



Guatemalan Red Cross paramedics attends Honduran migrants before they are deported, in Morales, Guatemala, Thursday, Jan. 16, 2020.

Associated Press

the Central American border agreement between Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua.

There was no violence in the encounter, though some wept and begged to be allowed to continue, while police gave them no choice but to go back. Red Cross workers gave several migrants anti-inflammatory medicine for wounds on their feet.

Guatemalan police who declined to be identified by name said the United States paid for the buses. The U.S. Embassy in Guatemala did not immediately confirm that.

The action effectively dissolved what had been the largest and most cohesive group that left the Honduran city of San Pedro Sula on Wednesday in response

to a call for the first migrant caravan in many months. Guatemala's tactics mirrored those employed last year by Mexico to discourage and break up caravans on its territory following intense pressure from Washington.

Guatemalan President Alejandro Giammattei said Wednesday that the migrants would be allowed to pass through Guatemala, though he noted they would need the proper papers and predicted they would run into a "wall" in Mexico. Almost immediately on Wednesday most of the migrants fractured into smaller groups, some as small as 20-30 people, and began walking along highways, boarding buses and hitching rides in private cars. It was nothing resem-

bling the mass human flows that formed in recent years, inspiring the ire of U.S. President Donald Trump and becoming a political football in the United States.

"I will say that this caravan is not anything even remotely similar to what we saw in '18 and a little bit in '19. A few folks here and a few folks there," acting U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Chad Wolf said in an interview on the "Brian Kilmeade Show" on FOX News Radio. "What has changed ... are the number of agreements that we have in place with Honduras, Guatemala, as well as Mexico."

Wolf also noted the presence of U.S. "tactical agents" in Guatemala.

Guatemala's immigration agency reported a total of 2,274 migrants registered at

its El Cinchado and Agua Caliente crossings. An unknown number of others crossed irregularly.

Many of those swept up Thursday were expected to give up and return to Honduras, even as scattered groups continued to walk and hitchhike through a tropical region of south-eastern Guatemala.

Among them was Génesis Fuentes, a 19-year-old Honduran who was part of the first caravan in October 2018. Back then she made it to the northern Mexico city of Mexicali, across from Calexico, California, and lived there working as a waitress and cook for about five months. She ultimately crossed the border with some friends near Algodones, which borders California and Yuma, Arizona, but was detained by U.S. border agents and deported last May.

Clad in a red T-shirt, a hooded sweatshirt, jeans and sandals, Fuentes was limping from a bruised knee. She explained that being sent back home meant returning to a life that is no life at all. "There is no work in Honduras," Fuentes said. "Since they deported us, we have not been able to find jobs." About 100 miles (160 kilometers) to the southwest, in Esquipulas, Guatemala, the more than 600 migrants who crossed Thursday at Agua Caliente lay on the ground under a low, gray sky, sleeping or eating. A plan was forming to spend the night there and leave before dawn Friday. □

U.S. backs Brazil's bid for membership in Paris-based OECD

By **MAURICIO SAVARESE**

Associated Press

SAO PAULO (AP) — The U.S. government is backing Brazil's bid to join the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, providing a foreign policy boost for Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro.

"The United States wants Brazil to become the next country to begin the accession process" to the OECD, said a U.S. State Department spokesperson for the

Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs. "The Brazilian government is working to align its economic policies with OECD standards while prioritizing OECD accession to reinforce economic reforms," the spokesperson said in a statement sent to The Associated Press on Wednesday. The State Department spokesperson declined to be named in line with department rules.

The Paris-based OECD advises developed countries

on economic policy.

The U.S. announcement is welcome news for Bolsonaro, whose alignment with U.S. President Donald Trump has been the cornerstone of his foreign policy. The U.S. government had said in October that it was prioritizing Argentina's inclusion, then governed by right-leaning President Mauricio Macri, a Trump ally. Macri lost his reelection bid.

"The American announcement of a priority for Bra-

zil to join the OECD once more shows we are building a solid partnership with the U.S.," Brazilian Foreign Minister Ernesto Araújo said on Twitter.

Trump recently walked back an earlier decision to impose tariffs on Brazilian steel and aluminum.

Separately, Bolsonaro's administration has decided to leave a regional group called the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, also known by

its Spanish acronym CELAC. Brazil's Foreign Ministry told The AP that it "instructed certain embassies in Latin America and the Caribbean, earlier this week, to communicate the decision to suspend the participation in different forums of CELAC, both political and technical."

Brazil's decision is due to the presence of Cuba and Venezuela in the group, according to O Globo newspaper. □

LOCAL



L.G. Smith Steak & Chop House: “It is All about the Right Mindset”

ORANJESTAD — #1 of 15 best steakhouses on TripAdvisor, #4 of 46 of fine dining on TripAdvisor in Aruba and #8 of fine dining in the Caribbean It all applies to L.G. Smith Steak & Chop House. There is more: the ONLY restaurant where you can indulge in AUTHENTIC Wagyu steak from the Kobe region in Japan. And to top it off; impeccable service in a setting where the classic school meets contemporary attitude. “It is all about the right mindset”, says Heidi Michiels, restaurant manager of L.G. Smith Steak & Chop House.

One wall in the restaurant carries an artsy face with: Attitude is Everything. Well, the staff of L.G. Smith Steak & Chop House chooses the right attitude. “We are honored by the recognitions on TripAdvisor, a reward after years of hard work and dedication and a goal set to become #1. And we did it,” says Heidi. What makes this steak & chop house stand out? According to the comments they receive from guests it’s the service in combination with the high quality food. “This is a team effort, without a successful team you cannot achieve this. We believe in consistency and passion for the job.” Unique detail is the Butcher Table; they bring their fine steaks and salt to your table to choose from. The restaurant itself has a city-like vibe and a styling where old school is respected while the new world is discovered. A DJ plays chill lounge music to complete the confident setting.

Miracle Meat Man

The ‘miracle meat man’ behind the kitchen delights is executive chef Sebastian Cechet from Uruguay. “We invest in very high quality products, a good example is the Kobe beef which is authentic Wagyu from Japan, the ONLY one on the island. Not everybody knows what this is so let me explain. The Wagyu is a Japanese cow and there is a certain region in Japan where they raise this cattle to a certain standard, in this case the region is Kobe. There is also Wagyu raised in the U.S. and Australia, either is a full-bred Japanese cow or a cross-breed between Japanese and local cow, both are not authentic from Japan but still great meat.” Every Friday night the restaurant has its HaiKobe night, where you can enjoy the real thing against a price that gives great bang for the buck, says the chef. “Our supplier in the States informed us that in the U.S. one pays minimum \$ 25 per ounce while our price is \$ 15 per ounce, quite a difference.”


USDA-certified Angus Beef

The restaurant offers several beef programs, among others the prime steaks; USDA-certified Angus Beef, and there are options for fish and seafood. The chef continues explaining the dry aged experience; how they give their steak its unique flavor. “Before our prime cuts make their way to your plate, we place them inside our dry-aging chamber for 30-60 days. This dry-aging process allows natural enzymes inside the steak to break down muscle tissue, tenderizing the texture and accentuating its flavor. Venture inside and taste one for yourself.” Naturally there is a broad wine menu with choices from all over the world and the most awesome Craft Cocktails, such as WATER, SMOKE, MIST & FIRE. Each cocktail is carefully crafted to perfection and incorporates fresh organic juices, local Aruban aloe; premium whis-


key, bourbon, gin, port and cognac; and/or herbs such as lavender, sage and sweet bay leaf, among other ingredients. The unexpected presentation of each drink is what takes the cocktails to the next level, incorporating all the trends of modern mixology. “Cherry on the pie is our service, we make no concessions about that.” For both manager and chef, there is only one answer when we ask their favorite dish: “Wagyu from Japan! It is simply the best and a unique offering on this island.” □



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Rave reviews for the new Aruba Food Tour visiting 5 Restaurants



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Naturally Aruba's cuisines is also represented at one of the stops. The food tour is currently only available on Mondays and Thursdays at 7pm and runs a little over 2.5 hours. The official name is 'Fusion of the World Food Tour' and it takes you on a culinary adventure to discover Aruba's melting pot. On this walking & tasting tour in the soothing evening hours, a local guide will introduce you to Aruba's multi-cultural cuisine and serve you the local scoop. The tour takes you through the colorful streets of Oranjestad, Aruba's capital, to five different local eateries where you will sample Jamaican, Cuban, Dutch, Italian and typical Aruban food. (Restaurants & Cuisines are subject to change).

For bookings: www.arubawalkingtours.com, telephone +297 699 0995 or your favorite concierge. □

AHATA and HCP Media: Unveil Inaugural Edition of New Destination Guide: Aruba Magazine

ORANJESTAD — The Aruba Hotel & Tourism Association (AHATA), in partnership with HCP Media — a custom publishing and media company — announces the launch of its new official publication, **Aruba Magazine**, the organization's annual destination guide to be distributed to hotel guests.

"We are delighted to provide visitors with an in-depth look at the wide range of leisure activities and experiences, both cultural and historic that await beyond the comforts of your guest room and hotel property" says

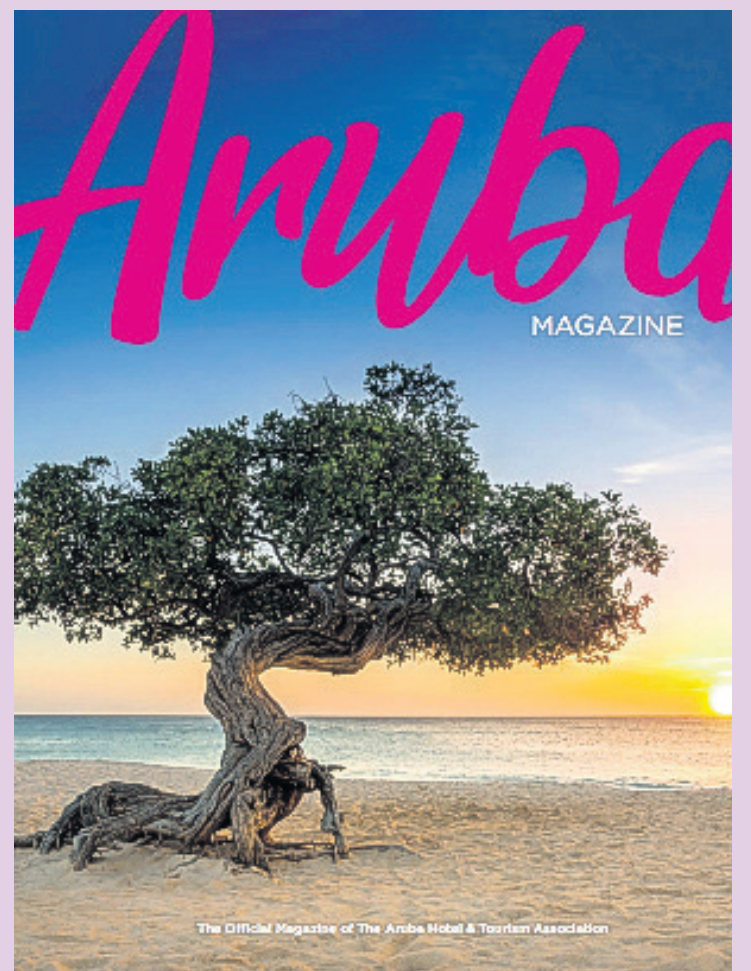
Tisa LaSorte, President & CEO of the Aruba Hotel & Tourism Association. "With HCP's trusted expertise, we created a beautiful publication that highlights the history, sights, activities, art and cuisine that define this One Happy Island."

Featuring fresh design and engaging content, every element of the content serves to highlight the unique personality, history and adventures Aruba has to offer visitors. From cover to cover, AHATA, its members and its supporting advertisers are featured as key businesses and valuable assets to visitors look-

ing to get the most out of their stay.

"Creating this beautiful magazine on behalf of the Aruba Hotel & Tourism Association is an honor for HCP," says Marisa Beazel, President & Publisher of HCP Media. "It is a wonderful opportunity to bring Aruba's exciting offerings to life within the pages of Aruba Magazine."

The first edition of the annual destination guide will be available throughout the island and online in January 2020. To view the digital edition visit ahata.com. □



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Makeover of Tierra del Sol Restaurant almost done: Aruba's first Premium Casual dining experience is on its way

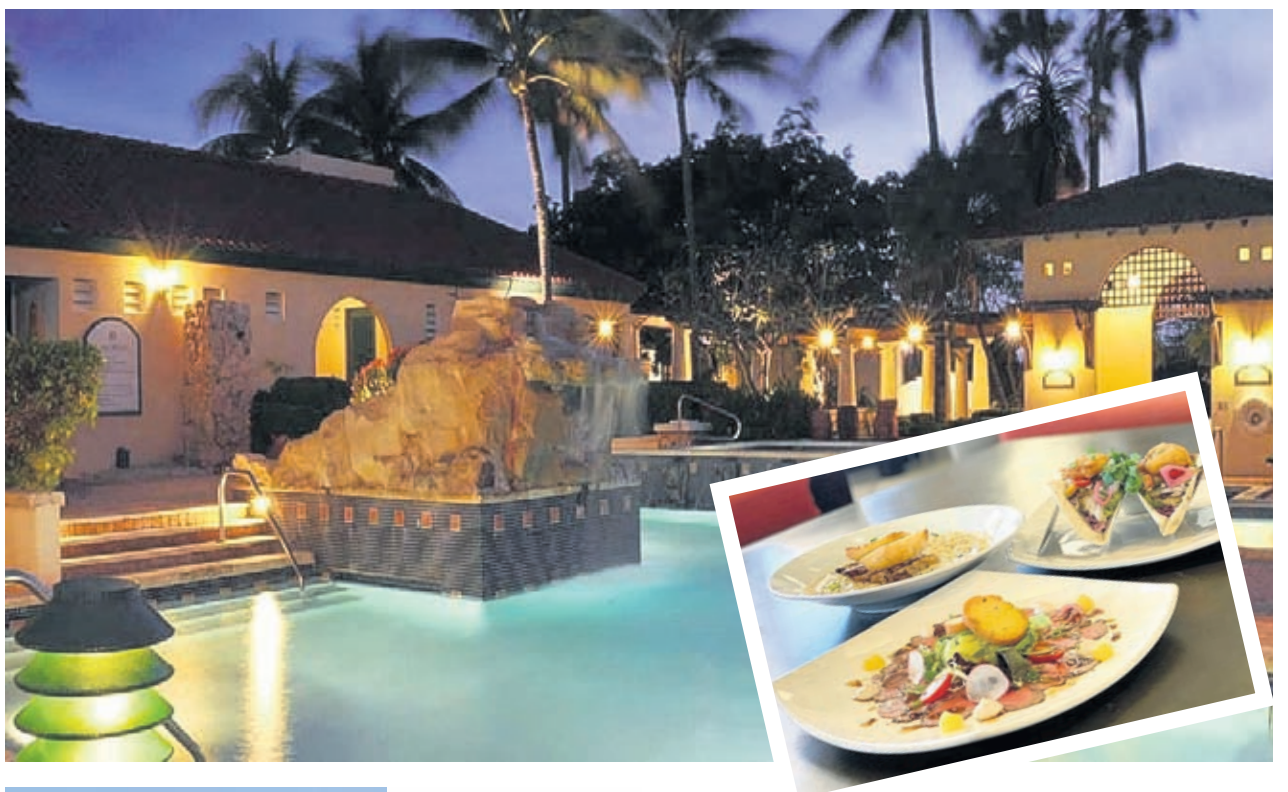
NOORD — Mark our words — very soon you are in for a dining journey like no other! The Restaurant at Tierra del Sol invites you to discover their new space after a complete renovation. Be enchanted by excellent cuisine, friendly service and a gorgeous setting surrounded by nature and tranquility. A place that marks the different. Coming soon.

The new space showcases a fashionable color scheme, new furniture, new floors and a repositioning of elements giving the interior an impressively refreshing atmosphere. This will make you fall in love with The Restaurant at Tierra del Sol all over again. The final construction details are being finalized and the team is thrilled to announce the opening announcement any week now. Stay tuned for the announcement date through Aruba Today's newspaper or social medias channels of Tierra del Sol's or Aruba Today.

Meanwhile

In the meantime, bring your friends and family to enjoy lunch or early dinner at the 19th Hole Bar at Tierra del Sol, open daily from 10:00am to 8:00pm.

Get away from the crowds within a short distance and unwind in the refined yet casual ambiance of Tierra del Sol Resort & Golf. ☐



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At least ten reef-associated shark species in the Dutch Caribbean

WAGENINGEN, THE NETHERLANDS — Wageningen Marine Research reported ten reef-associated shark species in the Dutch Caribbean in a last year published study as part of Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance (DCNA)'s Save Our Sharks Project. The most common species are the nurse shark and the Caribbean reef shark. Overall, more sharks were observed in conservation areas than in unprotected areas, highlighting the importance of these zones in shark conservation.

More than 100 million sharks are killed each year as a result of fishing and shark finning activities, twice the rate at which they can reproduce. The demand for fins and other shark products has driven a number of species close to extinction. Sharks are especially vulnerable to overfishing and habitat degradation as they are late to mature and produce few young. The main threats to sharks in our waters are accidental bycatch, habitat degradation and the risk of a shark fin market developing, which would lead to targeted fishing of sharks.

We need healthy oceans and healthy oceans need sharks

Sharks keep our oceans healthy. These top predators remove sick or weak members of their prey populations. A decrease in number of sharks leads to a disturbed natural balance in the sea. This can affect the overall fish population, and good fish stocks are not only important for fishermen that depend on fishing but also for (dive) tourism and the local community.

Respect, not fear, sharks

Sharks are some of the most misunderstood species. For generations sharks had an undeserved bad reputation. People tend to see them as terrifying animals that pose a danger to everything that swims in the ocean, including humans. But we now know that is very far from the truth; these magnificent creatures are essential to healthy oceans and risks to humans are small.

DCNA's Save Our Sharks Project

There is a lack of knowledge concerning the distribution and abundance of shark and ray species throughout the Dutch Caribbean. To combat this knowledge gap, from 2015-2018, DCNA ran the "Save our Sharks" (SOS) project for the Dutch Caribbean, funded by



Caribbean reef shark in the Man of War Shoal Marine Park, Sint Maarten. Photo credit: Melanie Meijer zu Schlochtern

the Dutch Postcode Lottery. In this project DCNA collaborated with local fisherman and scientists and aimed to build popular support for shark and ray conservation amongst the local community, as well as increasing knowledge about shark and ray species within the region by conducting a number of research projects.



Nurse shark on the Saba Bank which is part of the Yarari Marine Mammal and Shark Sanctuary. Photo credit: Hans Leijnse (SHAPE/DCNA)

Shark Research

A last year published study by Wageningen Marine Research as part of DCNA's SOS Project established a baseline for current shark diversity, distribution, abundance, spatial behaviour and population structure for inshore reefs around the Dutch Caribbean islands.

There were two methods used by the researchers to study sharks. One method used Baited Remote Underwater Video (BRUV) which used a device consisting of two

cameras set in front of a baited feed bag. The idea is that as sharks come near the bait bag to feed, video footage can be collected to identify and count local shark populations. The other method was acoustic telemetry to track sharks. In this method, a small acoustic tracking device is implanted within the shark. Acoustic receivers are installed at specific locations, and whenever sharks with these transmitters travel near the receiver (within a range of 450 to 850 metres) they are recorded.

The first studies using BRUV were conducted on Saba, Saba Bank and St. Eustatius to better understand the local population of sharks and rays and their relative abundances, and were funded by the Dutch Government. Starting in 2015, as part of the SOS project, additional studies were conducted to include the waters around Bonaire, Curaçao and Sint Maarten. In 2017 a BRUV survey was done at Aruba, financed by Global Finprint.

In addition, as part of the SOS project, acoustic telemetry was also used to better understand the movements of sharks, habitat use, migration and connectivity between islands. The telemetry study tracked two shark species, Caribbean reef shark (*Carcharhinus perezi*) and nurse shark (*Ginglymostoma cirratum*) around Saba (from 2014) and then around Saba Bank, Sint Maarten and Sint Eustatius (from 2015).

Findings

In BRUVs deployed around Sint Maarten, Curaçao and Bonaire the most common detected shark species were Caribbean reef shark, with Sint Maarten also frequently

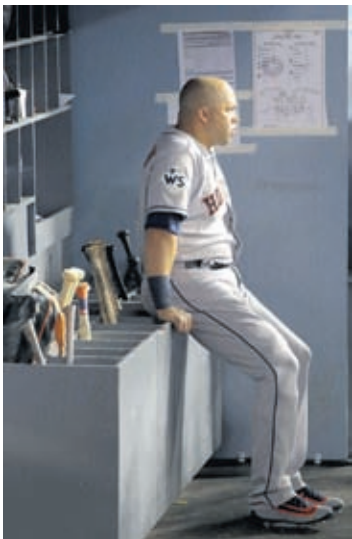
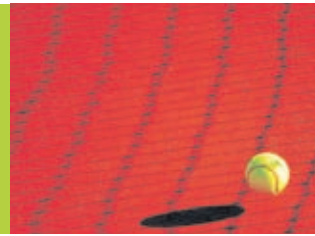
showing nurse sharks. Overall, more sharks were observed in marine parks or areas of conservation than in unprotected areas, highlighting the importance of these zones in shark conservation. Furthermore, when comparing the BRUV surveys from Sint Maarten, Curaçao and Bonaire to previous BRUV studies from Aruba, Saba, Sint Eustatius and Saba Bank, it showed that the Aruba survey had the largest shark diversity (8 species) and the Bonaire survey the lowest (2 species). The Saba survey documented 5 shark species, Saba bank had 4 shark species with Curaçao, Sint Eustatius and Sint Maarten each registering 3 shark species. There was an additional BRUV submarine test at 300 metres deep off Curaçao which found an additional shark species (Cuban dogfish). In total, at least 10 shark species were seen within the Dutch Caribbean in the different BRUV surveys.

The acoustic telemetry studies demonstrated that both the Caribbean reef shark and nurse shark have small home ranges and strong site fidelity. Large crossings between areas were rare, and found for two Caribbean reef sharks and one nurse shark which travelled between Saba and Saba bank. The two Caribbean reef sharks made short directed journeys back and forth, whereas the nurse shark after two years absence showed up at the Saba Bank before returning to Saba. One nurse shark from another study on the US Virgin Islands was detected in the network on the Saba Bank, a distance of at least 160 kilometres.

Importance of Protected Areas

Both the BRUV and acoustic telemetry studies showed higher presence of reef associated sharks within the conservation zones, along with high site fidelity and small home ranges. Furthermore, as some longer distance movements were also documented, interconnectivity between these areas is just beginning to be understood. The ongoing study on acoustic telemetry (funded by the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (LNV)) will yield more data on this. Therefore, not only are local marine parks crucial for the conservation efforts of sharks and rays, but larger conservation networks, such as the Yarari Marine Mammal and Shark Sanctuary which comprises all the waters of Bonaire, Saba and Sint Eustatius, are vital to protect entire populations. □

SPORTS



In this Oct. 24, 2017, file photo, then-Houston Astros' Carlos Beltrán waits in the dug-out during the sixth inning of Game 1 of baseball's World Series against the Los Angeles Dodgers, in Los Angeles.
Associated Press

New Mets manager Beltrán out amid sign-stealing scandal

By MIKE FITZPATRICK
AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Carlos Beltrán is out as manager of the New York Mets before a single game, the latest fallout from the Houston Astros' sign-stealing scandal that has rocked Major League Baseball. The Mets announced the decision Thursday in a news release, saying Beltrán and the team "agreed to mutually part ways." The move came two days after Boston cut ties with manager Alex Cora, who was Houston's bench coach in 2017 when Beltrán played for the Astros. A day before that, manager AJ Hinch and general manager Jeff Luhnow were fired by Houston soon after they were suspended for the 2020 season by Commissioner Rob Manfred for their roles in the cheating scheme.

Continued on Page 23



AIR GORDON

Magic snap Lakers' 9-game winning streak in 119-118 thriller

Orlando Magic forward Aaron Gordon goes up for a dunk as Los Angeles Lakers guard Avery Bradley, left, and center JaVale McGee defend during the second half of an NBA basketball game Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2020, in Los Angeles. The Magic won 119-118.

Associated Press
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Mickelson struggles with driver in 2020 debut at La Quinta

By JOHN NICHOLSON

AP Sports Writer

LA QUINTA, Calif. (AP) —

Phil Mickelson drove so far left on the par-4 ninth that he was in the rough behind a tree all the way across the adjacent first fairway. While Lefty struggled off the tee Thursday at The American Express in his first round of the year, the drive through two fairways actually wasn't a big miss because he was trying to hit into the first fairway to get a better angle to the back right pin.

"Takes the water out of play and I just have a much better angle," said Mickelson, the 49-year-old Hall of Famer competing for the first time since early November. "I actually pushed it a little bit across and got a little bit unlucky to be behind the tree, but I ended up just chipping a little wedge underneath it and getting it on."

He made a tap-in par there and shot a 2-under 70 at La Quinta Country Club to fall six strokes behind leaders Zac Blair and Murray Grayson.

"I didn't score as I probably could have or wanted to, but I really had a good day," the first-year tournament host said. "It wasn't quite as sharp as I wanted it to be, maybe a little bit



Phil Mickelson hits from the third tee during the first round of The American Express golf tournament at La Quinta Country Club on Thursday, Jan. 16, 2020, in La Quinta, Calif.

Associated Press

rusty, but it was a good first day." Grayson and Blair shot 64 in sunny and mostly calm conditions. Grayson closed with a bogey on the par-4 ninth on PGA West's Stadium Course, also the site of the final round in the pro-am event.

"I've been here since Dec. 30 working on the game and I feel like I probably am the most prepared of the field for all three courses," said Grayson, the 2017 Barbasol Championship winner. "Coming off of a long offseason you never

expect to come out the gates like I did firing, but I'm comfortable around all three of these courses. ... I love it out here in the desert."

Blair had a bogey-free round at La Quinta.

"It was perfect today, course was in really good shape," Blair said. "Drove it really well, made some good putts. But it's a little easier out here this week right now than it was in Hawaii last week, so it's nice." Rickie Fowler, Scottie Scheffler and Hank Lebioda shot

65. Fowler and Scheffler opened at La Quinta, while Lebioda played PGA West's Jack Nicklaus Tournament Course. Fowler is playing the event for the first time in six years.

"It's a good start," Fowler said. "Obviously, you look at scores it's usually pretty low out here, especially when you look at weather like this and the conditions of the courses. Conditions are perfect here at La Quinta. Greens are about the best that we see all year."

Mickelson birdied the par-5

fifth and sixth holes to get to 3 under, then gave away two strokes on the par-4 eighth when he drove left into the water and hit his third left of the green.

"I've been working on kind of a little low shot to get it in play and I hit it a few times today and I didn't hit it as efficiently as I wanted to, but the miss wasn't as bad as some of my other drives," said Mickelson, the tournament winner in 2002 and 2004.

Lefty birdied the par-5 11th and 13th, holing out from the rough on 13 after failing to reach the green from a left bunker. He made bogey on the par-4 17th, missing a 7-footer after hitting left into a bunker, and closed with a par.

"I feel like I'm ready to go on a tear, like I'm excited to play," Mickelson said. "Felt like 70 was the worst I could have shot. I'm going to come out tomorrow and get it going."

Playing partner Tony Finau shot 69. At No. 15 in the world, he's the top-ranked player in the field.

Mickelson and Finau will play the Nicklaus Tournament Course on Friday, then the adjacent Stadium Course on Saturday.

Defending champion Adam Long opened with a 69 at La Quinta. □



Driver Carlos Sainz, of Spain, drinks water during stage eleven of the Dakar Rally between Shubaytah and Haradh, Saudi Arabia, Thursday, Jan. 16, 2020.

Associated Press

Sainz, Brabec poised to win Dakar Rally with 1 stage to go

HARADH, Saudi Arabia

(AP) — At 57, Carlos Sainz is poised to win a third Dakar Rally after playing it safe on the penultimate stage on Thursday.

A day after grabbing a giant 18-minute gap on rivals Nasser Al-Attiyah and Stephane Peterhansel, Sainz gave back eight minutes on the sandy 379-kilometer route from Shubaytah back to Haradh.

Peterhansel and Al-Attiyah dueled for more than four hours before Peterhansel prevailed by 10 seconds.

Sainz was content to minimize risks on stage 11 and cruise home. He's set to

add to his previous victories in 2010 and 2018, all of them with co-driver Lucas Cruz. They have led since stage three.

Al-Attiyah, the defending champion 10 minutes behind overall, conceded he was driving for second place, only six seconds ahead of Peterhansel, the 13-time winner and teammate of Sainz.

"We gained some time, but not enough," Peterhansel said. "Now, if Carlos can bring it home, it'll be great for the team."

American biker Ricky Brabec is set to win his first Dakar at his fifth attempt. Brabec let main rival Pablo

Quintanilla speed away, and the Chilean held off Matthias Walkner by nine seconds to win his second stage of this Dakar. Quintanilla slashed Brabec's overall lead by 12 minutes down to 14, and that should still be plenty for Brabec to win on Friday in Qiddiya.

"I rode defensively today. I went at 70% to avoid pushing man and machine too hard," Brabec said. "I'm happy to be here, and now I'm mainly thinking of getting over the finish line. Tomorrow could be a great day, I just want to keep this good vibe going." □

Fultz records 2nd triple-double, Magic beat Lakers 119-118

By The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) —

Markelle Fultz hit two big layups in the final minute while scoring 21 points during his second career triple-double, and the Orlando Magic snapped the Los Angeles Lakers' nine-game winning streak with a 119-118 victory Wednesday night. Fultz added 11 rebounds and 10 assists, while Aaron Gordon had 21 points and a late go-ahead basket as the Magic became the first sub-.500 team to beat the Western Conference-leading Lakers this season despite blowing a 21-point lead in the second half.

Wes Iwundu scored a career-high 19 points, and Nikola Vucevic scored seven of his 19 points in the fourth quarter of the Magic's eighth win in 12 games. LeBron James had 19 points and matched his career high with 19 assists before missing a tying 3-pointer with 3 seconds left for the Lakers (33-8), who hit the halfway point of their regular season with their first loss since Christmas.

Quinn Cook scored a season-high 22 points, including a 3-pointer at the buzzer, while Troy Daniels added a season-high 17 for the Lakers. Los Angeles finally lost in its fourth straight game without injured superstar Anthony Davis.

Kentavious Caldwell-Pope also scored 17 points for the Lakers in their final home game before a five-game road trip while the Grammy Awards take over Staples Center.

HEAT 106, SPURS 100

MIAMI (AP) — Kendrick Nunn scored 33 points, Goran Dragic added 17 and Miami held on to beat San Antonio and move back into the No. 2 spot in the Eastern Conference.

Bam Adebayo — cut from USA Basketball's national team by Spurs coach Gregg Popovich over the summer — had 14 points, 13 rebounds and seven assists for the Heat. Miami improved to 18-1 at home, one win shy of matching last season's home win total.



Orlando Magic guard Markelle Fultz, right, shoots as Los Angeles Lakers center JaVale McGee defends during the first half of an NBA basketball game Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2020, in Los Angeles. Associated Press

Jimmy Butler scored 12 and Duncan Robinson added 11 for Miami.

DeMar DeRozan scored 30 points on 12-of-14 shooting for San Antonio, while Patty Mills added 21 for the Spurs. San Antonio had won three of its last four games, all those wins coming against top Eastern Conference teams Milwaukee, Boston and Toronto.

TRAIL BLAZERS 117, ROCKETS 107

HOUSTON (AP) — Damian Lillard scored 25 points and CJ McCollum added 24 as Portland withstood a late surge by Houston.

Russell Westbrook had a triple-double with 31 points, 12 assists and 11 rebounds on a night when James Harden scored a season-low 13 points. Houston lost consecutive games for the first time since a season-high three-game skid from Nov. 20-24, and has dropped three of its last four.

Carmelo Anthony added 18 points with 12 rebounds for Portland in his first game against Houston since the Rockets parted ways with him after just 10 games last season.

76ERS 117, NETS 106

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Tobias Harris scored 34 points, including two big baskets in the final two minutes that proved to be the difference, as Philadelphia

topped Brooklyn.

Ben Simmons had 20 points and 11 assists for the 76ers, who improved to 19-2 at home.

Brooklyn has lost nine of 11 overall and six straight away from home. The Nets were led by Spencer Dinwiddie's 26 points and eight assists. Jarret Allen had 17 points.

Josh Richardson had 15 points and Furkan Korkmaz added 15 off the bench. Al Horford had 14 points and eight rebounds for the Sixers.

PISTONS 113, CELTICS 103

BOSTON (AP) — Sekou Doumbouya scored a season-high 24 points and Detroit snapped a three-game losing streak with a win over Boston.

Markieff Morris matched his season best with 23 points. Derrick Rose added 22 points and Sviatoslav Mykhailiuk had a season-high 21. The Pistons shot a season-best 60.3% from the field.

Andre Drummond added 13 points and 13 rebounds to post his 34th double-double of the season.

Gordon Hayward had 25 points and seven rebounds, Jaylen Brown finished with 24 points and 12 boards and Kemba Walker scored 19 points on 7-of-19 shooting and 2 for 11 from 3-point range.

BULLS 115, WIZARDS 106

CHICAGO (AP) — Zach LaVine had 30 points, seven rebounds and seven assists, and banged-up Chicago beat Bradley Beal and Washington.

Chicago placed seven players in double figures in its second win in its last nine games.

Thaddeus Young had 18 points and eight boards, and Tomas Satoransky scored 18 points against his former team.

Beal scored 23 points on 8-for-13 shooting after he was listed as questionable because of right shoulder soreness.

Jordan McRae had 16 points for Washington, which has dropped three of four. Isaiah Thomas and Davis Bertans scored 12 points apiece.

RAPTORS 130, THUNDER 121

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Norman Powell scored 23 points, and Toronto held off a furious rally and beat Oklahoma City.

Pascal Siakam and OG Anunoby each added 21 points for the Raptors, who shot a season-high 61.2% from the field.

Dennis Schroder scored 25 points, Danilo Gallinari scored 23 and Shai Gilgeous-Alexander added 21 for the Thunder, who cut a 30-point deficit to three before Toronto held on.

PACERS 104, TIMBERWOLVES 99

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Domantas Sabonis matched a season high with 29 points and added 13 rebounds and six assists to lead Indiana over Minnesota.

Malcolm Brogdon added 21 points and Doug McDermott scored 14 off the bench for the Pacers, who have won three straight.

Jarrett Culver led Minnesota with 17 points and Gorgui Dieng had 15 points and 11 boards. The Timberwolves have lost three in a row.

Minnesota big man Karl-Anthony Towns missed his 15th straight game with a left knee sprain. A combination of several players matched up on Sabonis struggled early to keep him in check in Towns' absence.

NUGGETS 100, HORNETS 86

DENVER (AP) — Rookie reserve Michael Porter Jr. scored 19 points and recent call-up P.J. Dozier had a big Denver debut filling in for injured point guard Jamal Murray in the second half of a win over Charlotte. Murray exited the game with 1:32 remaining in the second quarter after rolling his left ankle.

Dozier finished with 12 points in 13 minutes, including a stretch in the second half where he scored nine straight for the Nuggets.

Terry Rozier scored 20 points for the Hornets, who wrapped up a winless four-game trip.

MAVERICKS 127, KINGS 123

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — Luka Doncic had 25 points, 15 rebounds and a career-high 17 assists for his NBA-leading 12th triple-double, and Dallas held off a late run to beat Sacramento.

Seth Curry scored 21 points off the bench as Dallas won its third straight despite the absence of Kristaps Porzingis, who missed his ninth consecutive game. Dwight Powell added 17 points and nine rebounds, and Tim Hardaway Jr. scored 18.

De'Aaron Fox had 27 points and 12 assists for Sacramento. Harrison Barnes and Buddy Hield scored 25 apiece. □

Voracek scores in OT, Flyers beat Blues 4-3

By **JOE HARRIS**
Associated Press

ST. LOUIS (AP) — The Philadelphia Flyers have shown the ability to play up to their competition.

Jakub Voracek scored in overtime and the Flyers beat the St. Louis Blues 4-3 on Wednesday night.

The win capped a four-game stretch in which the Flyers played three teams who at the time were tied for the NHL points lead (Washington, Boston and St. Louis) and one against Tampa Bay, the reigning President's Trophy winner. Philadelphia went 3-1 during the stretch.

"We've played against some real tough opponents lately, Washington, Tampa Bay, and Boston, and to come in here tonight against the Stanley Cup Champions, play the way we did hard at both ends, there were some performers on the ice that were making it real challenging for us to keep our focus and our cool," Flyers coach Alain Vigneault said. "But we did and we battled and we found a way to grind out and get a greasy road win against a real tough team."

Scott Laughton, Michael Raffl and Travis Konecny scored for the Flyers. Brian Elliott, playing for the first time since Jan. 7, stopped 30 shots and improved to 6-2 in his career against his former team.

Justin Faulk, Ryan O'Reilly and Alexander Steen scored, and Jordan Binnington made 21 saves for the Blues, who had their NHL best nine-game home winning streak snapped. The streak matched the longest in franchise history set from Jan. 26-Feb. 26, 1991. Voracek's goal spoiled the Blues' comeback bid from two goals down and snapped his 10-game scoreless drought, dating back to Dec. 21.

"You could tell why they are so successful in the playoffs because I felt after we tied the game 1-1 they started playing physical and all 18 guys were finishing checks," Voracek said. "They played really heavy for awhile there. When they bring this kind of game in the playoffs I see why they won last year." With the Blues trailing 3-1, O'Reilly cut the deficit in half with his ninth midway through the third. The goal snapped a seven game scoreless stretch for O'Reilly, dating back to Dec. 29.

Steen tied it with 6:21 left on a backhand after Robert Thomas' pass found him all alone in front of the Flyers' net. It was Steen's fourth of the season, all of which came on the Blues' current five-game homestand.

"I thought they started making wiser choices than us," Steen said. "Obviously they were down one and came out with some jump in the second and I didn't

think we matched it as well as we have in the past, especially during this home-stand. But going into the third I thought we stepped it up again. It was a back and forth hockey game." Faulk's power-play goal, a one-timer off a perfect feed from Steen, gave the Blues a 1-0 lead with 5:36 left in the first period. Faulk has 21 points in 31 career games against Philadelphia, the most he has scored against any team. St. Louis has at least one power-play goal in 11 of their last 14 games. Laughton tied the game with 7:17 left in the second period as a deflected puck got past Binnington for his sixth of the year. The goal was originally credited to Tyler Pitlick, but the NHL on Thursday changed it to Laughton.

Raffl banged home a rebound of Robert Haag's slap shot to put the Flyers up 2-1 with 4:17 left in the second. It was Raffl's fifth goal of the season and first in three games.

"It's just a different vibe, a different feeling in the locker room," Raffl said. "It seems like when we play the top teams boys show up, boys are ready, and it was a lot of fun lately."

Konecny's power play goal 26 seconds into the third gave the Flyers a 3-1 lead. Konecny capitalized on a slick no-look pass by James van Riemsdyk.

"Everybody played hard,"



St. Louis Blues center Ryan O'Reilly (90) fights Philadelphia Flyers forward Michael Raffl (12) of Austria during the second period of an NHL hockey game Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2020 in St. Louis.
Associated Press

Voracek said. "Everybody had a good game. They had six power plays. We had two. I think we handled ourselves pretty well and waited until overtime for the game-winner so that's good."

NOTES: The Blues activated D Carl Gunnarsson (upper body) from the injured reserve and placed D Colton Parayko (upper body) on the injured reserve, retroactive to Jan. 2. ... Flyers assistant coach Mike Yeo made his first return to

St. Louis since he was replaced by Craig Berube in November 2018. ... The Blues are 21-0-6 this season when scoring first, the only team in the NHL without a regulation loss in that scenario. ... Flyers G Carter Hart (abdominal strain) will miss 2-3 weeks and G Alex Lyon was recalled from Lehigh Valley of the AHL under emergency conditions. ... F Joel Farabee has been loaned to Lehigh Valley and F Chris Stewart has been placed on waivers. □

WNBA expands to 36-game schedule adds Commissioner's Cup



In this Sept. 29, 2019, file photo, WNBA Commissioner Cathy Engelbert speaks at a news conference in Washington.
Associated Press

By **DOUG FEINBERG**
AP Basketball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The WNBA season is expanding to a 36-game schedule and adding the Commissioner's Cup tournament the league announced Thursday. The league had a 34-game schedule since 2003. The season begins on May 15 and ends on Sept. 20.

Each team will play 10 Cup games during the season with the last one happening on July 10. The games will be the first home and road games against conference opponents. The championship is between the top team in each conference in Cup standings and is tentatively scheduled for Aug. 14.

"We are incredibly excited to introduce a first-of-its-kind in-season tournament for our league and present more regular-season games on ABC, increasing the WNBA's national television exposure," said WNBA Commissioner Cathy Engelbert. "The Commissioner's Cup offers fans another competition through which to support their favorite teams and adds a new dimension to the season for our players and teams."

Starting in 2021, the prize money for the Commissioner's Cup and other in-season tournaments will be a minimum of \$750,000. □

Top women's players to be part of NHL All-Star Weekend

By JOHN WAWROW
AP Hockey Writer

The magnitude of the moment wasn't lost on Kendall Coyne Schofield — wearing her No. 26 Team USA jersey — as she dug her skates into the ice waiting for the starter's whistle to blow. It took 14.346 seconds, to be exact, for Coyne Schofield to complete her lap in the NHL All-Star fastest skater competition in San Jose last year. And the 27-year-old from Illinois didn't need to hear the roar from the crowd, see the smiling NHL players' faces or understand how the video would go viral on social media to appreciate what she had accomplished.

In becoming the first woman to participate in a skills competition event, and finishing seventh among eight participants, Coyne Schofield had an inkling of how much she opened the door of opportunity for expanding female player involvement at the NHL level.

"The moment in San Jose was incredibly special," she told The Associated Press this week. "And to see how many people it impacted in such a positive way, I had an optimistic feeling something special was going to be done here."

Coyne Schofield was referring to the the NHL All-Star festivities taking place in St. Louis next week. The league announced Wednesday that the skills competition on Jan. 24 will feature a 20-minute 3-on-3 scrimmage between two



In this Jan. 25, 2019, file photo, United States' Kendall Coyne Schofield skates during the Skills Competition, part of the NHL All-Star weekend, in San Jose, Calif.

Associated Press

10-player women's teams — nine skaters and a goalie each from the national teams of the U.S. and Canada, the world's two best. "I was the individual that skated that lap," said Coyne Schofield, selected to play for Team USA. "So to step on that ice alongside 19 other women just shows how we've earned this opportunity to have more women involved."

The league couldn't help but take notice after last year.

NHL chief content officer Steve Mayer, who oversees the game's production, was already dreaming up ideas to add female players in St. Louis before Coyne Schofield completed her

lap. Rather than attempt to duplicate the series of events that led to Coyne Schofield's participation, which came only after Colorado Avalanche forward Nathan MacKinnon backed out with an injury, Mayer chose to expand the women's involvement. The teams feature players who have combined to win 39 Olympic and 108 world championship medals, and the game provides much-needed exposure to a sport in flux. The game also builds on the league's bid to expand its audience. "Yes, we're trying to obviously bring more folks into the fold, and this is just one way to do it," Mayer said. "There are so many young

girls that are playing, and an event like this is another way to influence them, to show that, 'Hey, I can be on this stage some day.'"

He already foresees the women's game becoming an All-Star weekend fixture. "That's the intention here to give them a forum they deserve, that they've earned," Mayer said.

The American team will include Brianna Decker, Jocelyn Lamoureaux-Davidson and Alex Carpenter, currently playing professionally in China. The Canadian roster includes Marie-Philip Poulin, Sarah Nurse and Rebecca Johnston.

Two Hockey Hall of Fame inductees, American Cammi Granato and Canadian

Jayna Hefford, will serve as coaches. And the four-person officiating crew will be made up of women who made their debuts at various NHL prospect tournaments in September.

One player from each team will be selected through a Twitter poll to compete in the newly introduced "Shooting Stars" event, during which All-Stars will shoot pucks from the stands at various targets on the ice. This marks the third consecutive year women have played a role in the All-Star game.

In 2018 at Tampa Bay, with Team USA holding its pre-Olympic camp nearby, the NHL invited three players to demonstrate each skill event. They included Hilary Knight, whose preview of the shooting accuracy event took just 11.64 seconds, which would have placed her second, just behind Brian Boyle's time of 11.626 seconds.

Coyne Schofield said the the exposure comes with additional pressure as women showcase their abilities before an international television audience.

"We have to take advantage of every moment and every opportunity we have because at the end of the day, we've earned those moments," Coyne Schofield said. "And we're going to keep fighting and keep playing, because we know if we do both of those things, more opportunities will be created for the next generation." □

Giants make Alyssa Nakken first female major league coach

By JANIE McCAULEY
AP Baseball Writer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Alyssa Nakken became the first female coach on a major league staff in baseball history Thursday when she was named an assistant under new Giants manager Gabe Kapler.

Major League Baseball confirmed Nakken is the first woman coach in the majors. Nakken is a former softball standout at first base for Sacramento State who joined the club in 2014

as an intern in baseball operations. She and Mark Hallberg, who was also named as an assistant Thursday, will work to promote high performance along with a close-knit team atmosphere.

Kapler, who expressed during the winter meetings that he would hire some coaches for nontraditional roles, said in a text message Nakken (nack-in) will be in uniform.

The team said Nakken has been responsible for "de-

veloping, producing and directing a number of the organization's health and wellness initiatives and events."

The NBA has several female assistant coaches. The NFL's San Francisco 49ers, playing in this Sunday's NFC championship game, have Katie Sowers as an offensive assistant.

At Sacramento State from 2009-2012, Nakken was a three-time all-conference player and four-time Academic All American. She

went on to earn a master's degree in sport management from the University of San Francisco in 2015.

"Alyssa and Mark are highly respected members of the organization and I'm delighted that they will now focus their talents on helping to build a winning culture in the clubhouse," Kapler said.

"In every organization, environment affects performance, and baseball clubhouses are no different. That's why in addition

to assisting the rest of the coaching staff on the field, Mark and Alyssa will focus on fostering a clubhouse culture that promotes high performance through, among other attributes, a deep sense of collaboration and team."

San Francisco also signed left-hander Drew Smyly to a one-year contract. Smyly went a combined 4-7 with a 6.24 ERA over 25 appearances with 21 starts and 114 innings between Texas and Philadelphia last season. □

Will Henry's runs or Mahomes' passes decide AFC champion?



Tennessee Titans running back Derrick Henry (22), left, runs past Baltimore Ravens strong safety Chuck Clark (36) during the second half of an NFL divisional playoff football game, Saturday, Jan. 11, 2020, in Baltimore; and Kansas City Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes, right, celebrates in the final moments of an NFL divisional playoff football game against the Houston Texans, Sunday, Jan. 12, 2020, in Kansas City, Mo.

Associated Press

By BARRY WILNER
AP Pro Football Writer

The Titans haven't been to the Super Bowl since 2000. That's barely a blip on the football history screen: The Chiefs haven't been there since 1970. One of them is headed for the big game in Miami. Here's how they match up for the AFC championship:

WHEN TENNESSEE HAS THE BALL

Run. Then run again. Derrick Henry (22) has been sensational in the postseason after leading the league in rushing. Powerful and fast, elusive enough and versatile, he's a defensive nightmare.

The Titans will stick with him until the Chiefs prove they can slow him down, something they never did in Week 10. That onus will fall on a D-line led by Chris Jones (92) and Frank Clark (55), LBs Anthony Hitchens (53) and Damien Wilson (54) and, likely, safeties Tyrann Mathieu (32) and Daniel Sorensen (49), who had a huge game last week.

The Chiefs like to go with five defensive backs, but they might need more bulk on the field against Henry. Dealing with a blocking unit paced by LT Taylor Lewan (77), who is a stud when he isn't collecting far too many penalties, veteran LG Rodger Saffold (76) and

RT Jack Conklin (78) will be a chore for KC.

QB Ryan Tannehill (17) is 2-0 in the postseason despite barely throwing the ball. When he has — he led the league in passer rating at 117.5 — Tannehill has been effective enough, including two TD throws vs. Baltimore.

Also intriguing will be the Chiefs' vastly improved secondary against a group of somewhat obscure wide receivers led by rookie A.J. Brown (11). Tannehill plays no favorites and also targets any of his three tight ends. He needs to watch out for ball-hawking Mathieu, while the loss of rookie safety Juan Thornhill (22) could damage KC's coverage.

WHEN KANSAS CITY HAS THE BALL

Expect fireworks. Maybe not the kind that led to 41 consecutive points against Houston after the Chiefs fell behind 24-0, but some explosiveness for sure.

The catalyst, naturally, is QB Patrick Mahomes (17), who was slowed by injuries early and midway in the season. Now that he's healthy, Mahomes is looking like the 2018 league MVP who tore up the NFL.

Given time — and Tennessee has not displayed an overwhelming pass rush — Mahomes can pick apart any defense, even one

as resilient as the Titans. His symbiosis with TE Travis Kelce (87) keys the attack, but he also has game-breaking WRs Tyreek Hill (10) and Sammy Watkins (14) and lightning-fast rookie Mecole Hardman (19). Damien Williams (26) handles the bulk of the run game, and Tennessee has been formidable against the rush. Not just stopping fourth-and-1 plays, either. The Chiefs' best blockers, RT Mitchell Schwartz (71) and LT Eric Fisher (72), need to control the trenches against underrated DT Jurrell Casey (99) and his chums, who never backed down against the Patriots or Ravens.

Harold Landry (58) led the Titans with nine sacks and Kamalei Correa (44), who had five, has a quick burst to the quarterback, while Tennessee might have the league's top secondary with safeties Kevin Byard (41) and Kenny Vaccaro (24) and cornerbacks Logan Ryan (26) and Adoree' Jackson (25). It will definitely be tested Sunday. Ryan was a busy guy with 113 tackles, four picks and four forced fumbles this season.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Titans All-Pro Brett Kern (6) is the league's best punter, kicking them high and far. But don't ask about PK Greg Joseph (7) because he hasn't attempted a field

goal since joining the team in December.

The Titans didn't have a touchdown on any kick returns, nor did they yield any. They did block the Chiefs' sixth field-goal attempt to clinch a November game victory. Joshua Kalu said that after seeing Kansas City try so many field goals, it gave him a chance to time up the snap thanks to a head bob by the long snapper.

Kansas City, though, started its comeback against the Texans when Hardman broke free on a kickoff run-back. He had a 104-yarder in the regular season. Hill fumbled a punt return that led to an easy score for the Texans last week.

Harrison Butker (7) is a reliable placekicker with good range. He did miss three extra points, one fewer than his misses on field goals.

Veteran punter Dustin Colquitt (2) had a kick blocked by the Texans for a TD. He's generally reliable.

COACHING

Andy Reid has something close to a Hall of Fame resume, and a second trip to the Super Bowl — he lost with Philadelphia in 2005 — certainly would enhance that.

Reid has been masterful in his handling of Mahomes and the schemes that make KC's offense as dangerous as any. He was wise

enough to bring in an aggressive defensive coordinator after last year's debacle on that side of the ball cost the Chiefs a shot at the NFL title. It took a while before Steve Spagnuolo's system took hold, and it didn't look too great in last week's victory over Houston. But it's far more formidable than in 2018.

Mike Vrabel has created a no-fear culture in Nashville. That has been most evident in the past three weeks, when the Titans would have been done with a loss. Offensive coordinator Arthur Smith is wise enough to stick to the run game, but funky enough to come up with things such as Henry's jump pass for a touchdown at Baltimore.

INTANGIBLES

The Chiefs haven't been to a Super Bowl since 1970. Yes, a half-century. That's incentive enough.

Also take into account how close they came last year, with an overtime coin toss and penalty by ex-linebacker Dee Ford playing a huge role in their falling short of the Super Bowl.

Tennessee has never won an NFL championship, whether living in Music City or in Houston. The Titans also are a sixth seed, which means they're the underdog each week.

Not that it's mattered so far. □

Piazza: MLB mess 'unintended consequence' of game's new era

By BILL WHITEHEAD

Associated Press

PORT ST. LUCIE, Fla. (AP) —

To Hall of Fame catcher Mike Piazza, the sign-stealing scandal that's enveloped Major League Baseball signals where the sport is these days.

"Unfortunately, it's an unintended consequence of the digital age and all this information," Piazza said.

Piazza was at the New York Mets' spring training complex on Thursday for a street naming ceremony, two hours before the team let go new manager Carlos Beltrán. Beltrán was the third manager to lose his job this week in the wake of the cheating scheme by the Astros. Houston manager AJ Hinch was suspended by MLB and then fired by the club.

Alex Cora, the Astros' bench coach in their 2017 championship season, was ousted by the Red Sox. Beltrán was the only Houston player mentioned in MLB's report.

"I think it's a very sad episode for the game," Piazza said. Piazza recalled his early days behind the plate in the big leagues.

"My first bench coach, Joe Amalfitano with the Dodg-



Former New York Mets catcher Mike Piazza, right, acknowledges the crowd as Mets COO Jeff Wilpon, left, claps during a ceremony to name a street Piazza Dr., in front of the Mets spring training facility, Thursday, Jan. 16, 2020, in Port St. Lucie, Fla.

Associated Press

ers, was 95 percent on pitchouts when I was catching. It would be uncanny. He would have the third base coach's signs, when they were going to steal or hit-and-run. And he would call the pitchout. He would watch them, but that's fair game."

"But obviously to use a camera and relay it to the dugout is something I can't relate to," he said. "Can

you imagine if Nolan Ryan knew you were relaying his signs? You'd probably be missing a head."

The Mets held a dedication ceremony for Piazza, renaming a street on the renovated spring complex that serves as the home of the Advanced Class A St. Lucie Mets and hub for New York's rehabilitating players.

A 62nd-round selection in

the 1988 June draft, Piazza said he was unaware of MLB's proposal to trim the draft down to about 20 rounds.

"Twenty rounds? I would have never been here today," Piazza replied with a laugh. "Look, one thing I know about baseball is that it's like college. If you have the grades, you're going to graduate. If you're talented and you are persistent and

you sacrifice and do the right things, you'll eventually find a way to get there."

"The game is changing, there's no question about it. I feel like a dinosaur," the 51-year-old Piazza said.

The stretch of road on 31 Piazza Drive is a short one, but it stretched all the way to Sicily for Piazza.

"What a tremendous honor, especially being a resident of Florida the last 30 years," said Piazza, who teared up momentarily during his speech when recalling his ailing father, Vince.

Santa Lucia, the namesake of St. Lucie County, came from Syracuse in Sicily, the homeland of the Piazza family.

"I wish he was here today to see this because he's been such an inspiration in my career. He's not doing well health-wise ... but he called me this morning and wanted to wish me the best," Piazza said.

The complex's main stadium will be renamed Clover Park next month after Fiserv purchased the naming rights. A year-long \$57 million renovation project is scheduled to be completed once New York's pitchers and catchers report on Feb. 10. □

Beltrán

Continued from Page 17

Next to fall was Beltrán, the only Astros player mentioned by name Monday when MLB issued its findings from an investigation into the club's conduct. No players were disciplined, but the nine-page report said Beltrán was among the group involved in the team's illicit use of electronics to pilfer signs during Houston's run to the 2017 World Series championship.

"We met with Carlos last night and again this morning and agreed to mutually part ways. This was not an easy decision," Mets general manager Brodie Van Wagenen and Chief Operating Officer Jeff Wilpon said in a statement.

"Considering the circum-

stances, it became clear to all parties that it was not in anyone's best interest for Carlos to move forward as manager of the New York Mets. We believe that Carlos was honest and forthcoming with us. We are confident that this will not be the final chapter in his baseball career. We remain excited about the talent on this team and are committed to reaching our goals of winning now and in the future."

The 42-year-old Beltrán, with no managerial experience, was hired to replace Mickey Callaway as Mets manager on Nov. 1. The former New York slugger was given a three-year contract with a club option for 2023 and introduced three days later by Van Wagenen and Wilpon



In this Nov. 4, 2019, file photo, new New York Mets manager, Carlos Beltrán, center, poses for a picture with general manager Brodie Van Wagenen, left, and Mets COO Jeff Wilpon during a baseball news conference at Citi Field in New York. Beltrán is out as manager of the Mets. The team announced the move Thursday, Jan. 16, 2020.

Associated Press

during a news conference at Citi Field.

"At a meeting this morning with Jeff and Brodie we mutually agreed to part ways. I'm grateful to them

for giving me the opportunity, but we agreed this decision is in the best interest of the team. I couldn't let myself be a distraction for the team. I wish the en-

tire organization success in the future," Beltrán said in the statement.

Beltrán becomes the first manager to be let go without managing a game since Wally Backman, who was hired by Arizona in November 2004 and fired four days later after legal and financial problems were revealed.

When the Mets hired Beltrán in November, Van Wagenen said: "We can trust Carlos, and that goes a long way."

A little more than two months later, Beltrán is out in the wake of transgressions that occurred with a different organization, according to MLB.

And the Mets are looking for a new manager again. They will be the 11th team to change managers since opening day of last year. □

Does the naked body belong on Facebook? It's complicated

By **BARBARA ORTUTAY**
AP Technology Writer
SAN FRANCISCO (AP) —

When is a photograph of nude bodies artistic or titillating? A woman's exposed nipple a political statement or erotica?

A video of childbirth might show genitalia. Should what someone considers a celebration of life be censored?

In 1964, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart declined to define what constitutes obscenity but famously added, "I know it when I see it."

In the 21st century, does Facebook?

The social media behemoth is in a well-publicized struggle to address hate speech, extremism, abuse and misinformation on its services — which together serve nearly 3 billion people worldwide.

At the same time, it's been retooling its policies on nudity. It's tweaking its original heavy-handed policies to account for modern nuances around gender identity, political speech and self-expression, employing thousands of people and quickly evolving artificial intelligence for the task.

But some of its users — including activists, sex therapists, abuse survivors, artists and sex educators — say policies at Facebook and its Instagram service are still too vague and unevenly



This photo taken Oct. 3, 2019 shows artist Spencer Tunick, a photographer known internationally for his shoots assembling masses of nude people, at the FLATZ Museum in Dornbirn, Austria.

Associated Press

enforced. They say their work is being unfairly censored, condemning them to "Facebook jail" with no warning and little, if any recourse.

And it's no small matter for them. Artists can be suddenly left without their audience, businesses without access to their customers and vulnerable people without a support network. And it means that a company in Silicon Valley, whose online platforms have become our town squares, diaries, art galleries and protest platforms, often gets final say on matters of free speech and self-

expression. "Instagram really is the magazine of the world right now. And if artists are being censored on Instagram it's really dangerous for freedom of speech and openness when it comes to the body and art," said Spencer Tunick, a photographer known internationally for his shoots assembling masses of nude people.

Of course, there's near-universal agreement that child exploitation and non-consensual images don't belong on social networks. Pornography probably doesn't either.

Facebook's monitoring

systems do a better job with nudity than with hate speech, extremism and misinformation. After all, a butt is a butt and a nipple is a nipple. But deciding when a nipple is art, porn or protest gets murky even when humans are doing the deciding. Teaching AI software about human sexual desire is a whole other ballgame.

From its start as a college photo directory and social network, Facebook banned nudity. Over the years, as Facebook's audience grew bigger and more diverse, the ban loosened. The company instituted exceptions for breastfeeding women, for images of post-mastectomy scars. Birthing videos are now allowed, as are photos of post gender reassignment surgery.

"We had this policy that said no genitals on the platform," said Kim Malfacini, the Facebook product policy manager who oversees how the company's community standards are developed. "Until two years ago there were no exceptions to that."

But the reviewers began seeing photos and videos women shared about their childbirth, she said. Facebook carved out an exception for images of childbirth even though they show genitalia. Now,

the images come with a warning screen.

Even with carefully thought-out policies, enforcement can feel arbitrary and the consequences, lasting.

Dawn Robertson started her women-empowerment campaign, "Grab Them by the Ballot," before the 2018 U.S. midterm elections. She wanted to inspire women to vote, especially in light of the MeToo movement and growing restrictions on abortion. She organized women to pose nude, covered only by strategically placed ballots, props and hashtags.

Then, she posted them on Facebook and Instagram. Suddenly, the campaign took off, though much of the attention was from right-wing publications such as Breitbart, Robertson said.

"All of a sudden, it was just insane, the negative feedback we got," she said. "Facebook banned my personal account."

She said she got no warning, or reason why she was banned, though she figured it was for nudity. That is even though Facebook allows nudity in some cases, including for political activism.

Artists have staged protests and pleaded with Facebook. Some have found other platforms to show their work, but they say the company's sheer dominance in online communications makes it difficult to have the same reach.

"What we are trying to do is open the gate somewhat," said Svetlana Mintcheva, director of programs at the National Coalition Against Censorship, which has asked Facebook to reconsider its ban on photographic nudity. "The human body is not this horrible, scary, traumatizing thing. It's a beautiful thing." But beauty has been historically a tricky thing to define. Which means Facebook's stance on nudity will likely continue to shift.

"No policy is set in stone," Malfacini said. "On any given policy, we are in some process of revisiting some part of it." □

Rights group demands Israel rein in murky spyware company

By **TIA GOLDENBERG**
Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — An Israeli court heard a case Thursday calling for restrictions to be slapped on NSO Group, an Israeli company that makes surveillance software that is said to have been used to target journalists and dissidents around the world. The case, brought by Amnesty International, calls for Israel to revoke the spyware firm's export license, preventing it from selling its contentious product abroad, particularly to regimes that could

use it for malicious purposes. "They are the most dangerous cyber weapon that we know of and they're not being properly overseen," said Gil Naveh, spokesman for Amnesty International Israel. "That is the reason why we think that their license should be revoked."

NSO is implicated in a series of digital break-in attempts and the court case is the latest pushback against the company and its product. Last year, Facebook sued the hacker-for-hire company in U.S. federal court for allegedly target-

ing some 1,400 users of its encrypted messaging service WhatsApp with highly sophisticated spyware.

The spyware has also been implicated in the gruesome killing of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi, who was dismembered in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul in 2018. It is also said to be behind a campaign to compromise proponents of a soda tax in Mexico and an effort to hack into the phone of an Arab dissident that prompted an update to Apple's operating system. □

Panel finds FAA followed procedures in approving Boeing Max

By **TOM KRISHER and DAVID KOENIG**
AP Business Writers

A government advisory committee has concluded that federal regulators followed established procedures when they certified the Boeing 737 Max and did not delegate too much safety analysis for the plane to Boeing.

In a report Thursday, the panel said the FAA correctly treated the Max as an update to older 737s and not as a new type of plane, which would have subjected it to more examination.

The committee was appointed by Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao in April, after crashes in Indonesia and Ethiopia killed 346 people. It gave high marks overall to FAA's process for certifying planes, calling it safe and effective and a boost to the U.S. aerospace industry.

The committee's findings differ sharply from those of legislators who are investigating Boeing and the FAA. Key lawmakers have said they may try to stop the FAA from letting Boeing do some inspections and safety analysis on its own planes.

House Transportation Committee Chairman Peter DeFazio, D-Ore., said his panel's investigation has already found multiple times at which the certifi-

cation process failed. "I want to be very clear: 346 people died because the system failed," DeFazio said. He said it would be irresponsible to make no changes "and just hope for the best the next time."

Michael Stumo, whose daughter Samya was on the Max that crashed in Ethiopia, said the new report endorsed self-regulation by Boeing.

"This report is written as if by pre-crash industry lobbyists defending the current certification system," he said.

The top Republican on the Transportation Committee praised the report, however. It confirms that the U.S. remains "the global gold standard for aviation safety," and the current certification system does not need to be rebuilt because of the Max crashes, said Sam Graves of Missouri.

Boeing and the FAA said in brief statements that they would review the committee's findings.

Investigations into Boeing have revealed inter-

nal documents in which Boeing employees raised safety alarms about the Max while it was being developed and admitted misleading regulators. Lee Moak, a former airline pilot and union president who co-chaired the Chao-appointed committee, said the panel did not consider those messages.

"It was not the purview of, or charter of, the committee to look at or investigate email traffic," Moak told reporters. The committee wrote in its report that its mission was "to collect and analyze information, not find fault." The panel concluded that the FAA's system of delegating some safety work to aircraft manufacturers is "rigorous" and overseen by engineers and others who are committed to safety.

Asked about possible mistakes in FAA's certification of the Max, Moak said that was for other groups to investigate. The panel made some recommendations for changes, however, in-



In this Dec. 11, 2019, file photo workers walk near a Southwest Airlines Boeing 737 Max airplane parked at Renton Municipal Airport in Renton, Wash.

Associated Press

cluding more analysis of how pilots react in emergency situations. □



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GV \$5k OV \$7k
3BEDRM \$13k

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1B OV \$9k
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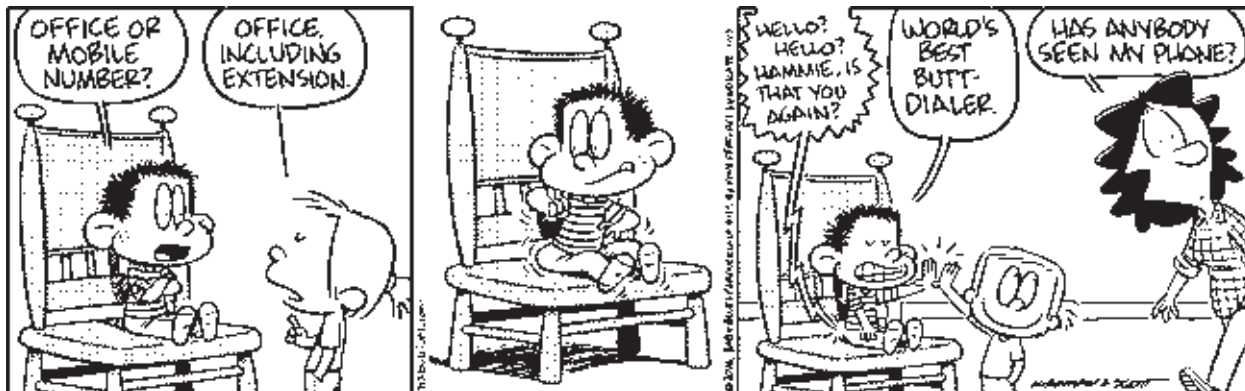
Blondie



Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

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| | 8 | 4 | | | | 6 | | 5 |
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| 4 | | | 9 | | | | | 1 |
| 5 | | 2 | 3 | | | | | 3 |
| | | 1 | | | | 8 | 2 | 9 |

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

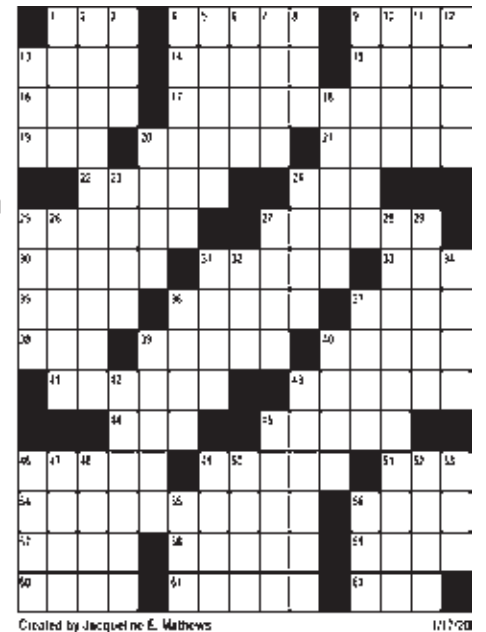
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| 3 | 4 | 8 | 7 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 9 | 5 |
| 2 | 7 | 5 | 9 | 4 | 3 | 8 | 6 | 1 |
| 5 | 8 | 3 | 6 | 7 | 9 | 1 | 4 | 2 |
| 9 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 7 | 8 | 6 |
| 7 | 1 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 8 | 5 | 3 | 9 |

ACROSS

- 1. Verbs
- 4. Prose writing
- 9. Visual or Laure
- 13. The Bee Gees
- 14. VF Agree
- 15. Round 'al bread
- 16. As... as pie
- 17. Accountant's need
- 19. Cake candies
- 20. Abbot's charges
- 21. Why... tery style
- 22. Creeps up on
- 24. Scale divisions
- 25. Fertilized
- 27. Most uncommon
- 30. Miniseries based on Alex Haley's book
- 31. Steam bath
- 33. Caress
- 35. Does an outdoor chore
- 36. Famed
- 37. Perry, who sang "Catch a Falling Star"
- 38. G's nickname
- 39. Make a solemn promise
- 40. Angry uproar
- 41. Character stox
- 43. Terryson's specialty
- 44. Unknown John
- 45. Stir from sleep
- 46. Thread holder
- 49. Go bad
- 51. Org for Knids & Vets
- 54. Fearless
- 56. False witness
- 57. Flow out slowly
- 58. Spend too much
- 59. All at... suddenly
- 60. on; crushed underfoot
- 61. Lose via "ud
- 62. "Yuck!"

DOWN

- 1. Boring event
- 2. Truman's successor
- 3. sauce str-ly ingred; often
- 4. Accompany
- 5. Reaches across
- 6. Oxi fabric
- 7. Curved paths
- 8. Are
- 9. Lonesome
- 10. Toright?
- 11. "Well, that went over like ol backs"
- 12. a soul; noody
- 13. Soothing drink
- 18. Zodiac sign
- 20. Church service
- 23. one's words; recants
- 24. Come to shore
- 25. Upper limbs
- 26. ...with, care
- 27. Had regrets about
- 28. So'd cooking fat
- 29. MRI detection
- 31. Moms ol p'glets
- 32. Suffix for consider or decor
- 34. Grossest; as a horror film
- 36. D-shaped or A-flat
- 37. Signs to actors
- 39. String quartet instrument
- 40. Impre's shoul
- 42. Though the world of
- 43. Self-confident
- 45. Yairman's bear
- 46. Fatsirk name
- 47. Peniless
- 48. Greek; queir
- 49. Barking marine mammal
- 50. St for a porrat
- 52. Renowned German composer
- 53. you kidding me?
- 55. Clinton's successor for short
- 56. Baseball's Gerrig



Created by Jacqueline E. Matthews

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

| | | |
|------------|------------|-------|
| MOPE | SETUP | ATRA |
| EARN | CRUSH | GAOL |
| WHIG | UNFAITHFUL | |
| SUN | WRIY | HAYES |
| CLOVE | LES | |
| CHEEKY | PORTAL | |
| OASIS | PLEBE | PIT |
| CUSS | SIEGE | GOBI |
| ATE | BOLTS | BALED |
| ESCAPE | ORIOLE | |
| ASH | STING | |
| START | FATE | ELF |
| YURPENTINE | STAR | |
| ONCE | OILER | KITE |
| PAST | VEERS | ICEO |

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Halley Time Travel

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 03/20/20 to 03/27/20 (2)
 02/21/20 to 02/28/20(4)

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 02/15/20 to 02/22/20

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 01/18/20 to 01/25/20
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 1 BR Ocean View \$9 K
 1 BR Ocean Front \$20 K
 2 BR Ocean View \$17 K
 2 BR Ocean Front \$26 K

Marriott Surf Club
 Platinum
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 2 BR Ocean Side \$16,5 K
 2 BR Ocean Front \$ 26 K
 3 Br Ocean View \$ 28 K
 Platinum Plus \$45 K
 2 BR WK 7 Ocean View

Aruba Divi Phoenix
 1 BR WK 2 \$17 K
 Building 8 Ground floor
 32 weeks remain
 1 BR WK 8 \$16 K
 building 6 on the 4th floor
 27 weeks remain

Aruba Divi Phoenix
 1 BR PH WK 8/9 \$22 K both
 14 th floor 32/22 weeks remain
 1 BR WK 11
 on the 7 th floor
 33 weeks remain \$15 K

Divi Links Golf
 1 BR WK 1/2/3 \$30 K
 Birdie 2 on the 3rd floor
 25 weeks remain each
 All 3 weeks together \$30 K
 Divi Links Golf
 Studio wk 2 \$7,5 K

Eagle 3 with 23 weeks remain
 1 BR WK 3 \$8,5 K
 Eagle 3 with 23 weeks remain
 1 BR WK 8/9 \$9,5 K each
 Eagle 9 with 27/19 weeks
 remain

Divi Links Golf
 2 BR WK 3 \$ 20 K
 Eagle 8 with 25 weeks remain
 1 BR WK 4
 Birdie 2 on 2sd floor
 19 weeks remain \$8.5K
 Studio WK 6 \$7,5 K
 Building F 22 weeks remain

Divi Links Golf
 Studio WK 1 \$7,5 K
 building 4 with 28 weeks remain
 Studio Wk 5 , 7 and 8 \$ 8 K
 each
 Birdie 4 with 28/27/29 weeks
 remain

Divi Village
 1 BR WK 1 \$8,5 K
 Studio WK 1 \$7,5 K
 Building D & F
 25 weeks on each
 Studio WK 1 \$7,5 K
 Ground floor Building C
 33 weeks remain

Paradise Beach Villas
 1 BR WK 1 & 2 \$20 K both
 2 sd floor pool/ocean view

Renaissance Suites
 1 BR WK 10 /11 \$8,5 K each
 5th floor garden view
 Barcelo All inclusive
 1 BR WK 8 \$15 K

Eagle Resorts
 1 BR WK 5,6,7,8 \$7,5 K each
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 1 BR WK 7 \$7,5 K
 1 BR WK 8 \$7,5 K

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U.S. drinking more now than just before Prohibition

By **MIKE STOBBE**
AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Americans are drinking more now than when Prohibition was enacted. What's more, it's been rising for two decades, and it's not clear when it will fall again.

That's the picture painted by federal health statistics, which show a rise in per-person consumption and increases in emergency room visits, hospitalizations and deaths tied to drinking. The stats aren't all bad. Drinking among teenagers is down. And there are signs that some people are taking alcohol seriously — such as the "Dry January" movement making the rounds on social media.

But overall, public health experts say America still has a drinking problem.

"Consumption has been going up. Harms (from alcohol) have been going up," said Dr. Tim Naimi, an alcohol researcher at Boston University. "And there's not been a policy response to match it."

HOW MUCH DO AMERICANS DRINK?

In the late 1910s, just before Congress banned the sale and manufacture of alcoholic beverages, each American teen and adult was downing just under 2 gallons of alcohol a year on average.

These days it's about 2.3 gallons, according to federal calculations. That works out to nearly 500 drinks, or about nine per week.

Historians say drinking was heaviest in the early 1800s, with estimates that in 1830 the average U.S. adult downed the equivalent of 7 gallons a year.

That waned as the temperance movement pushed for moderation, abstinence



In this June 16, 2016, file photo, bottles of wine are displayed during a tour of a state liquor store, in Salt Lake City.

Associated Press

and, later, a national ban on the manufacture and sale of alcohol. In 1919, Congress passed the 18th Amendment, instituting the ban. It went into effect on January 17, 1920 — 100 years ago, this Friday — and lasted 13 years.

In 1934, a year after Prohibition was repealed, per-capita consumption was under 1 gallon. It's been up and down since then. The apex was a heavy-drinking spell in the 1970s and 1980s, when U.S. per-person alcohol consumption was 2.75 gallons.

It went down in the mid-1980s, amid growing attention to deaths from drunken driving and after Congress passed a law raising the drinking age to 21. But it began climbing again in the mid-1990s.

"I think people sort of forgot all the problems (with alcohol)," said William Kerr, senior scientist at the Cali-

fornia-based Public Health Institute's Alcohol Research Group.

WHY IS ALCOHOL CONSIDERED A PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEM?

Excessive drinking is associated with chronic dangers such as liver cancer, high blood pressure, stroke and heart disease. Drinking by pregnant women can lead to miscarriage, stillbirth or birth defects. And health officials say alcohol is a factor in as many as one-third of serious falls among the elderly.

It's also a risk to others — through drunken driving or alcohol-fueled violence. And research based on surveys suggests that more than half of the alcohol sold in the U.S. is consumed during episodes of binge drinking.

More than 88,000 Americans die each year as a result of excessive drinking, a figure higher than the opioid-related deaths seen in a current drug overdose epidemic, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

This month, researchers at the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism released a different calculation of alcohol-related deaths. They scanned death certificates

from over two decades to search for mention of alcohol. The numbers were lower, at a little under 73,000 in 2017. The researchers said death certificates can be incomplete, and their number is likely an undercount. The more important finding, other researchers said, was that the number of alcohol-related deaths had doubled since 1999, and the death rate had risen 50%. Some or much of that may be related to the increasingly deadly drugs used in the overdose epidemic, since many people drink while taking drugs, said Aaron White, the study's lead researcher.

WHAT'S DRIVING THE INCREASES?

About three-quarters of alcohol-related deaths are in men.

But drinking among women — particularly binge drinking — has been a major driver of the increases in alcohol statistics.

White's study found that the female death rate jumped 85%, while the male rate rose 39%. The highest alcohol-related death rates for women were among those ages 55 to 74, that research found. But increases were seen in younger women, too.

Binge drinking is swing-

ing up most dramatically among women, other research has found.

Researchers say there's been a change in cultural attitudes toward drinking, including among many women. Internet memes popular with stressed-out moms call wine "mommy juice" and joke about it being "wine o'clock."

ISN'T A LITTLE BIT OF WINE GOOD FOR YOU?

Wine acquired a bit of a halo after some researchers observed that French people had lower rates of heart disease despite generally consuming high levels of saturated fat. This "French Paradox" triggered studies that suggested drinking a glass or two of red wine may have some benefits for heart health.

But increasingly, other researchers have poked holes in the hypothesis, arguing that lifestyle, diet and other factors probably deserve far more credit. After climbing for 24 years, U.S. wine consumption dipped last year, according to the research firm IWSR Drinks Market Analysis.

"I think the halo has tilted or fallen off," Naimi said.

"But," he added, "for most people who drink alcohol, health is not their primary consideration." □



In this undated photo provided by WWE, Inc., "Mean" Gene Okerlund interviews Rocky "Soul Man" Johnson. Associated Press

Wrestler Rocky Johnson, Dwayne Johnson's father, dead at 75

By DAN GELSTON
AP Sports Writer

Rocky "Soulman" Johnson, a WWE Hall of Fame wrestler who became better known as the father of actor Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson, has died. He was 75.

WWE issued a statement on Johnson's death Wednesday night. Johnson and Tony Atlas became the first black world tag team champions in WWE history when they defeated The Wild Samoans on Dec. 10, 1983.

The statement didn't provide details on the cause or location of Johnson's death.

"A loss for every fan of @WWE, Rocky Johnson was a barrier-breaking performer. Our thoughts are with his family at this time," WWE executive and wrestler Paul "Triple H" Levesque tweeted.

Johnson later helped train his son, who adopted the

Rocky moniker from his father. Johnson came to his son's aid after a match at WrestleMania in 1997. The Rock inducted his father into the WWE Hall of Fame in 2008.

Former professional wrestler Brian Blair, another 1980s WWE star, was friends with Johnson for decades and they still went to church together in the Tampa, Florida area. Blair told The Associated Press on Wednesday that Johnson had complained of an unspecified illness of late and had missed church that he attended with Blair and other former wrestlers. Blair said Johnson's wife, Sheila, was distraught over her husband's death.

"He was just under the weather, he thought he had the flu or something," Blair said by phone. "I said, 'You need to get checked out, Rocky.' He said he'd be OK. Then he missed this Sunday, a few days ago. □"

'Better Call Saul' gets renewed for 6th and final season

PASADENA, Calif. (AP) — "Better Call Saul" has been renewed for a sixth and final season consisting of 13 episodes that will air in 2021.

The upcoming fifth season debuts Feb. 23-24 on AMC. The "Breaking Bad" prequel starring Bob Odenkirk will air 10 episodes this year focusing on main character Jimmy McGill's decision to practice law as Saul Goodman, which creates unexpected changes for those around him.

Executive producer Peter Gould told a TV critics meeting on Thursday that it's the run everyone on the show wanted. After season four, Gould said he began envisioning how it would end. □



This image released by Universal Pictures shows Dr. John Dolittle, portrayed by Robert Downey Jr., right, with Jip, voiced by Tom Holland, in a scene from "Dolittle."

Associated Press

Review: 'Dolittle,' with Robert Downey Jr., is a disaster

By JAKE COYLE

Dr. Dolittle, who favored animals and shunned humans, was on to something. The century of human history since Hugh Lofting, in 1920, created his eccentric veterinarian character has only made Dolittle a more astute fictional figure, and a natural candidate for big-screen resurrection. Aquaman can talk to the fishes but Dolittle has the ability to converse with all fauna.

But if they could speak, no realm of the animal kingdom — no penguin, parakeet or panda — would have anything good to say about Stephen Gaghan's "Dolittle," a big-budget train wreck in which things go so awry that it can't even be said to be strictly for the dogs.

"Dolittle," starring Robert Downey Jr., arrives just weeks after the advent of "Cats," another Universal Pictures release likewise stuffed with computer generated animals. "Dolittle" is a more harmless and whimsical family entertainment, less likely to provoke nightmares than the digitally furred felines of Tom Hooper's Andrew Lloyd Webber adaptation. But, just the same, the two films together could be the worst setback for animalia since global warming, or at least "Howard the Duck." It's tempting to think: Well, it can't be that bad. Who doesn't like both Downey

and animals? At the very least, you would think, no amount of special effects can completely dilute such a vibrant and clever actor. He was even good in the Marvel movies!

But perhaps the biggest disappointment of "Dolittle" isn't the incoherent story line, the suffocating CGI or the unfunny stable of celebrity-voiced creatures. It's that Downey's personality doesn't come through at all, either a victim of the surrounding mess or a party to it. Seemingly going for a tamer Johnny Depp-as-Jack Sparrow-styled performance, Downey dons a vaguely Welsh accent, deepening his voice in a hushed tone. Worse, much of his dialogue seems to have been overdubbed, a likely component of the movie's extensive reworking in post-production and reshoots. It distances Downey — he sounds literally elsewhere — in a fantasy that's already plenty adrift. The movie is based on the second of Lofting's books, "The Voyages of Doctor Dolittle." He created the character first to, in letters home from the World War I front, entertain his children. Dolittle first appeared on screen in the 1967 movie, with Rex Harrison, and later in a series begun in 1998, with Eddie Murphy. "Dolittle," you can tell, doesn't sound like Gaghan's kind of thing, and none of the results will convince you

otherwise. The film, penned by Gaghan, Dan Gregor and Doug Mand, conjures a different reason for the book's sailing adventure.

Here, the doctor begins as a bearded recluse, grieving the loss of his explorer wife from behind the locked walls of his animal-populated estate. He sets off on a trip to find a remedy for an ailing Queen Victoria (Jessie Buckley), a hectic, seafaring journey that jumps from one harried scene to another.

But "Dolittle" isn't about much beside the gags of the CGI animals, none of whom do much to help Downey. I hesitate to name their voice actors, since guessing them is one of the movie's primary sources of entertainment. But you'll spot Emma Thompson as a parrot, Rami Malek as a gorilla, Kumail Nanjiani as an ostrich, Selena Gomez as a giraffe and Jason Mantzoukas as a dragonfly.

None of them have any character to speak of; they're there for increasingly weak jokes, which culminate in a scene revolving around a dragon's flatulence. A problem, as ever, is that buckets of visual effects are never good for comedy. And as last year's "Lion King" proved, hyper realism doesn't do talking animals any favors. The way things are going, animal rights activists may soon need to move to protect digital animals, too. □



This Dec. 18, 2019 photo shows singer Gloria Gaynor posing for a portrait in New York.

Associated Press

For Gloria Gaynor, God is key to her survival in life, music

By **NEKESA MUMBI MOODY**
AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Gloria Gaynor sees the hand of God in every aspect of her life, particularly when it comes to the tune that may be the most famous disco song ever created. Gaynor recalls when she first was presented with "I Will Survive," it was intended to be the B-side of another song, meaning it wasn't the one that was promoted to be a hit. She clearly remembers calling it a stupid decision, and lobbied for "I Will Survive" to get top billing, which won over the songwriters of the now classic song.

"I've always believed that God told them, 'Look, sit down, write a song, hold onto it, I'm gonna send you somebody,'" she said. "A(nother) divine appointment. ... it was meant to be the core of my purpose." Gaynor won her first and only Grammy for "I Will Survive" in 1980.

Now, 40 years later, she has a chance to add two more trophies to her collection thanks to her first gospel album "Testimony," which is nominated for best roots gospel album, and "Talking About Jesus," which is up for best gospel performance.

She's giddy to get back in the Grammy mix.

"I'm waiting to see the fashions, of course, everybody all dressed and looking wonderful and feeling good and happy and all of that," she said of the Jan. 26 ceremony, "and hoping, of course, that I win at least one Grammy, would be awesome if I could win them both."

Gaynor spoke to The Associated Press recently about her nominations, persevering in the music industry despite health challenges and her divine connection to her most famous song.

AP: What made you want to do a gospel album?

Gaynor: I just wanted to share the love and the knowledge of Christ through my music. I felt that

that was what I was called to do.

AP: This album is comprised of new material, some of which you co-wrote; even the song "Amazing Grace" is a new tune. What made you decide to go that route?

Gaynor: Well, I kind of feel like I've always been a bit innovative. I mean, if somebody writes a song that I want to sing and they've put something in it with bad grammar, I can't sing it. I just have to fix it. I just do it. And I wasn't trying to fix "Amazing Grace" except that I was trying to make it fit my life. And the more my testimony than the original writing of it. And so that's why we went that way with it.

AP: What has it been like to not only have the Grammy nominations after all this time, but also have this type of success?

Gaynor: Well, I did an album some time ago and I've felt that I just kind of ran out ahead of God. And, you know, when you do that, you find yourself out there by yourself.

So it didn't do well at all. And then when this album happened and the success came so quickly and was so quickly received and people were writing me not only telling me that they enjoyed the music, but that the songs were ministering to them ... this was my purpose to do all this through the music. So I've felt, yeah, I was right this time. This is God's timing and I'm on point.

AP: What has "I Will Survive" meant to you over the years.

Gaynor: At first it was something that I was singing for other people. And then as time went on, different things happened to me and it became my mantra as well. And through the death of my mother, through the death of all of my siblings, through my divorce, I mean, when I did my divorce, I did a marathon version ... (laughs). So the song has really meant a

lot to me as well as to other people. I fully understand because I've experienced what the song can do for you.

AP: This song has endured for so long, but have you ever been frustrated that this was your biggest song?

Gaynor: At first I thought, you know, this is a double-edged sword. People think I'm not able to sing anything else except "I Will Survive." They don't want to hear anything else. ... I'm not sick of the song, but I wish they would recognize that I could do something else, that I've recorded so many other great songs. And then when I came to the understanding that it was the core of my purpose and I kind of settled in and thought, Yeah, I'm OK. As the song says, "It is well with my soul."

AP: You've also endured a lot physically as well, with several back surgeries. How are you doing today?

Gaynor: I've had five back surgeries and each one has stopped me for a minute. ... The last one threatened to stop me for good. .. With a lot of prayer and a lot of faith, we found a doctor out in California who did this wonderful surgery, two surgeries on me, two totaling 18 hours and put 12 rods in my back.

And now I'm pain free I'm still performing. And I do better on stage and I do in everyday life. That is why I give credit to God and to the audience that he brings me, because the love that comes from my audience really sustains me during that period of time that I'm on stage. And it's just a wonderful time for me.

I always leave the stage hoping that the audience has had as good a time as I did.

AP: Could you see yourself making more dance music?

Gaynor: Well, the only dance music I'm planning on doing is music that to which you can dance it like David danced, dance unto the Lord. □

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| <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg); font-size: x-small;">NEW THIS WEEK!</p> <p style="font-size: small;">ROBERT DOWNEY JR. ANTONIO BANDERAS</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; font-size: large;">DOLITTLE</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES</p> | <p>PBP MON-THU 5:50 8:15 FRI 5:50 8:15 10:40 SAT 3:25 5:50 8:15 10:40 SUN 3:25 5:50 8:15</p> <p>PBP MON-THU 4:20 6:40 9:00 FRI 4:20 6:40 9:00 10:00 SAT 2:00 4:20 6:40 9:00 10:00 SUN 2:00 4:20 6:40 9:00</p> <p>PBP SENSORY FRIENDLY PRESENTATION SATURDAY, JAN 18 AT 1:00PM</p> <p>PBP SPANISH MON-FRI 5:20 7:40 SAT-SUN 3:00 5:20 7:40</p> |
| <p style="font-size: small;">KRISTEN STEWART VINCENT CASSEL</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; font-size: large;">UNDERWATER</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES</p> | <p>PBP MON-THU 6:05 8:20 FRI 6:05 8:20 10:35 SAT 3:50 6:05 8:20 10:35 SUN 3:50 6:05 8:20 10:35</p> <p>PBP FRI-SAT 11:20</p> <p>PBP VIP MON-FRI 5:15 7:25 9:35 SAT-SUN 12:55 3:05 5:15 7:25 9:35</p> |
| <p style="font-size: x-small;">ALSO SHOWING!</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">DEAN-CHARLES CHAPMAN GEORGE MACKAY</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; font-size: large;">1917</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; font-size: large;">2 GOLDEN GLOBE WINNER</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; font-size: large;">10 ACADEMY AWARD NOMINATIONS</p> | <p>PH MON-FRI 5:50 8:30 SAT-SUN 3:10 5:50 8:30</p> <p>PBP MON-FRI 3:50 6:25 9:00 SAT-SUN 1:15 3:50 6:25 9:00</p> |
| <p style="font-size: small;">ROSE BYRNE TIFFANY HADDISH</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; font-size: large;">Like A Boss</p> | <p>PH MON-THU 6:05 8:10 FRI 6:05 8:10 10:15 SAT 1:55 4:00 6:05 8:10 10:15 SUN 1:55 4:00 6:05 8:10</p> <p>PBP MON-THU & SUN 9:20 FRI-SAT 9:20 11:45</p> |
| <p style="font-size: small;">DWAYNE JOHNSON JACK BLACK</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; font-size: large;">JUMANJI THE NEXT LEVEL</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES</p> | <p>PBP MON-FRI 3:50 6:30 9:10 SAT-SUN 1:10 3:50 6:30 9:10</p> |
| <p style="font-size: small;">WILL SMITH TOM HOLLAND</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; font-size: large;">SPIES IN DISGUISE</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES</p> | <p>PBP MON-FRI 4:40 7:00 SAT-SUN 2:20 4:40 7:00</p> |

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In this Dec. 1, 2017 file photo, Demi Lovato arrives at Jingle Ball at The Forum in Inglewood, Calif. Lovato will perform the National Anthem at Super Bowl.

Associated Press

Demi Lovato to sing the national anthem at the Super Bowl

By The Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Grammy-nominated pop singer Demi Lovato will perform the national anthem at the Super Bowl.

NFL and Fox on Thursday announced the performance, which will take place ahead of the big game on Feb. 2 at Hard Rock Stadium in Miami.

Jennifer Lopez and Shakira will headline the halftime show. Lovato has mostly taken a break from the

public since focusing on her recovery after reportedly overdosing in July 2018. The singer, who has spoken about her struggles with an eating disorder, self-mutilation, drugs and alcohol, celebrated six years of sobriety in March 2018. But she relapsed, revealing the news in the song "Sober," released in June 2018.

A week before the Super Bowl, Lovato will perform at the 2020 Grammy Awards on Jan. 26. □

Edgar Allan Poe house in Baltimore named literary landmark

BALTIMORE (AP) — A national association representing libraries is honoring the Edgar Allan Poe House and Museum in Baltimore. A division of the American Library Association has added the Poe house to its national registry of Literary Landmarks. The museum will host a dedication ceremony on Sunday, which coincides with the celebration of the 211th anniversary of Poe's birth.

The house is the first literary site in Maryland to be included in the registry, the organization said. Previous dedications have included the homes of Tennessee Williams, Marjorie Kinan Rawlings and William Faulkner.

The master of Gothic horror lived at the Baltimore



This Dec. 4, 2008 file photo shows the exterior of the Poe house and Museum, a historic landmark in Baltimore.

Associated Press

house as an adult from 1833 to 1835. It became a museum in 1949 and was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1971. □

Review: Mac Miller posthumous album is heartbreakingly full

By MARK KENNEDY

"Why does everybody need me to stay?" Mac Miller asks on the first single from his latest release. He answered his own question with the superb posthumous "Circle."

Miller's 12-track album is heartbreakingly sublime, a portrait of a wry and honest musician acknowledging his demons but looking past them. "I'm here to make it all better with a little music for you," he sings. Miller died of an accidental drug overdose in 2018 at 26 and was working on "Circles" as a sort of companion album to his Grammy-nominated "Swimming." Producer Jon Brion, who worked on "Swimming" and also produced for Kanye West and Dido, was asked to finish Miller's work.

"Circles" shares the appealing confessional lyrics of "Swimming" but is more airy, more muted and understated. Miller was always an idiosyncratic artist, mixing hip-hop beats and samples with soul and warm funk, even jazz. Here, he is low-key, moody, spacey and anesthetized. He sings more than he raps. There's nothing flashy. Everything's thoughtful.

"Circles" is both spare but somehow full. A tiny hesitating sample serves at



This cover image released by Warner Bros. shows "Circles" by Mac Miller.

Associated Press

the backbone to "Blue World," a lazy drum and piano do the same for "I Can See." A repeated "eh-uh" runs through "Hands" and "Complicated" at first seems too simple but subsequent listens reveals a jewel-like construction.

The first single, "Good News," is addictive and must surely be a defining song for an artist taken far too soon. Delicate guitar plucking accompanies Miller's hangdog lyrics. "Runnin' out of gas, hardly

anything left," he sings. "So tired of being so tired." Brion is rightly in no rush to end it, and lets Miller go for more than 5 1/2 minutes.

Listeners will naturally focus on the references to death and they are definitely there. "Everybody's gotta live/And everybody's gonna die," he sings on "Everybody." But he's OK, too. "I've been alright" and "I'm feelin' fine." His advice to others? "Do not be afraid" and "take a little time for yourself." □

Lizzo, The Who, Foo Fighters among 2020 Jazz Fest top acts

By CHEVEL JOHNSON

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — The Who, Stevie Nicks and Foo Fighters will join Lizzo, Lionel Richie, Lenny Kravitz, The Avett Brothers and Elvis Costello at the 2020 New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, organizers announced Thursday. The festival, which annually celebrates the culture and heritage of New Orleans and Louisiana alongside performances by national and international artists, is scheduled over two weekends in the spring — April 23-26

and April 30-May 3 — at the Fair Grounds Race Course. More than 650 bands covering many genres of music will perform on 14 stages during the eight-day event.

Singer-rapper Lizzo dominated the pop, R&B and rap charts in 2019 with songs like "Truth Hurts" and "Good As Hell." Her major-label debut, "Cuz I Love You," garnered eight Grammy Award nominations, including album of the year, song of the year, record of the year and best new artist. She's also up for six NAACP Image

Awards and was named Entertainer of the Year by The Associated Press and Time magazine.

Lizzo, who is also an accomplished flautist, is scheduled to perform Saturday, May 2.

Also scheduled to perform is Nicks, who missed the festival's 50th anniversary performance with Fleetwood Mac, because of illness. The band had been scheduled as a last-minute replacement for the Rolling Stones, which also canceled because Mick Jagger needed medical treatment. □

Starbucks, home of the \$4 latte, is moving into poor areas

By DEE-ANN DURBIN AP

Business Writer

DETROIT (AP) — Starbucks has a point to prove: There's more to the company than selling \$4 lattes to rich people.

The Seattle-based coffee giant that has cultivated a reputation for being socially responsible said Thursday it is expanding its effort to put more coffee shops — and create more jobs — in poor neighborhoods.

Starbucks plans to open or remodel 85 stores by 2025 in rural and urban communities across the U.S. Each store will hire local staff, including construction crews and artists, and will have community event spaces. The company will also work with local United Way chapters to develop programs at each shop, such as youth job training classes and mentoring.

The effort will bring to 100 the number of "community stores" Starbucks has opened since it announced the program in 2015.

"All of these programs are with the intent of being purposeful and profitable," said John Kelly, Starbucks executive vice president of public affairs and social impact.

Starbucks opened its first community store in Ferguson, Missouri, in 2016, two years after the riots that broke out over the shooting of an unarmed black man by police. It has added 13 more locations since then, including stores in Baltimore, Chicago, Dallas, New Orleans and Jonesboro, Georgia. Another one will open this spring in Prince George's County, Maryland. Starbucks estimates the shops have created more than 300 jobs.

The project could help the company overcome lingering mistrust in some communities after the furor that erupted in 2018 when two black men waiting to meet someone in a Philadelphia Starbucks were arrested for not ordering anything. Starbucks mandated racial bias training at its 8,000 company-owned stores in response to that incident. Kelly said the stores reflect



This Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2020, photo, shows a Starbucks Community Store, which offers customers the usual Starbucks products along with a large space for community meetings and programs, in Phoenix.

Associated Press

Starbucks' core belief in responsible capitalism. The coffee shops are profitable, he said, and have the same menu as regular Starbucks stores.

Prices vary, but not by much. A grande coconut milk latte in Ferguson costs \$4.95, according to Starbucks' app. Six miles away, a Starbucks in University City charges \$5.25 for the same drink. In Jonesboro, a grande coffee is \$2.25. It's \$2.45 at a Starbucks in downtown Atlanta.



This Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2020, photo shows a Starbucks Community Store, which offers more space for patrons and a community meeting space, in Phoenix.

Associated Press



a barista trainer at Starbucks, opens the doors to the community meeting space at a local Starbucks Community Store, in Phoenix.

Associated Press

"This is not charity. These are successful stores," Kelly said, acknowledging neighbors' skepticism. "We're defying a lot of the stereotypes and we're proud to do so."

The Starbucks in Jonesboro lies on a busy road with

strip malls and numerous chain restaurants. Business was brisk on Thursday afternoon, with a dozen or so customers inside and a steady stream of cars at the drive-thru.

A man who was walking by the store and gave his

name as Leroy Z said he is glad Starbucks is giving locals another choice for coffee beyond the fast-food restaurants in town. But he was skeptical about how much Starbucks cares about the community and how much the store will bolster the local economy. "They wouldn't be here if they didn't think they could make money," he said. "They're here because this is a main drag to Atlanta." Brett Theodos, a senior fellow at the Urban Institute who studies economic development, said he has visited Starbucks' community stores in Chicago and Baltimore, and they seemed to be providing a service — and, more important, jobs — that those neighborhoods wouldn't otherwise have.

"I can't think either of a retailer, especially one that has more of a discretionary, higher-end purchase, being willing to push into neighborhoods and markets that have less purchasing power," Theodos said. "Starbucks usually appears when a neighborhood has the purchasing power to support it."

He also applauded Starbucks' plan to add community rooms in the stores, since low-income neighborhoods often don't have many places to gather.

But he thinks the impact will be limited. One Starbucks store won't cause a neighborhood to gentrify, he said. The program is unusual for a big chain. Starbucks has one advantage: Unlike McDonald's, which relies on franchisees, Starbucks owns its standalone U.S. stores and can open them wherever it wants to. Panera Bread opened a few pay-what-you-can cafes starting in 2010, but all have closed. They weren't profitable.

Starbucks said most of the 85 shops will be new, while some will be existing stores that have been remodeled. The company will consider various factors, including youth unemployment rates and low household income, in deciding where to build them, and will give priority to economically distressed areas.

In New Orleans on Thursday, around 20 people were eating, drinking and working on computers at the Starbucks community store, which sits near a vacant clothing shop. A sign behind the counter read, "This store stands for this community" and "Local contractors / Local partners / Local love."

Starbucks already offers tuition-free online college courses to employees and gives grants to those who come up with ideas for helping their communities. In 1998, it worked with former NBA star Magic Johnson to open stores in urban neighborhoods, but some struggled and closed. Starbucks said it learned from the experience. □